The Magazine for Advanced Comic Book Collectors!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

Celebrating Superman's 60th!

No. 63 • October 1998
A GEMSTONE PUBLICATION
$5.95 US/$7.50 CANADA

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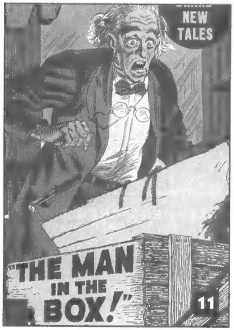

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Issue Number #63, September/October 1998

ON THE COVER: The Man of Steel's patriotic pose from **Superman** #14 (Jan/Feb 1942)... set against a collage of Superman Primrose cards (see page 52).

The last time I saw Superman

Back in 1955 I was sitting in front of our family's new 25" RCA TV set when I heard the immortal words… "Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! Able to leap tall buildings at a single bound! 'Look, up in the sky! It's a bird. It's a plane. No, It's Superman!' Yes Superman, who came to Earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal man. Superman… who can change the course of mighty rivers… bend steel with his bare hands… and who, disguised as Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper, fights a never ending battle for truth… justice… and the American way!"

Or at least that's the way I remembered it. To this day, certain scenes from the show still haunt my memory! Like the one where Superman/Clark Kent (immortally portrayed by George Reeves) is kneeling beside a jungle pool with a lump of coal in his hand. With a crunching sound, he surreptitiously squeezes the coal with smoke pouring from his clenched fist. He finally opens his fingers to reveal a large diamond (complete with facets no less) which he eventually uses to replace the "eye" stolen from the native's sacred idol. Even the unintentionally comic man-in-a-gorilla-suit didn't detract from the impact of the episode.

We moved across town shortly thereafter, next door to Benny Smith (who was nine, three years my senior). Benny had a whole stack of mid-fifties *Action, Superman, Jimmy Olsen, Adventure, Superboy,* and *World's Finest*… going back to before *FO* #1! I remember the other kids immediately went for Benny's Lionel train. But not me… I was way too curious about the comics, so I dove into the stack, eagerly reading every luscious panel for as long as Benny's Mom would put up with me.

And that's where the confusion began. On TV there were two Miss Lane's… the ruff-and-tumble-Lois, Phyllis Coates, was suddenly replaced by the kinder, gentler Lois… Noel Neil. Neither were much like Lois in the comics. The TV Jimmy Olsen (Jack Larson) seemed too old for the part, or was the comic book Jimmy too young? My six-year-old brain couldn't tell. But the most perplexing inconsistency was Clark. In the comics he was kind of a wus… in the TV introduction he was mild-mannered, yet George Reeves' portrayal of Kent on TV was strong and assertive! I respected the TV Clark… even looked up to him. Every week the TV Clark behaved in a way that made me feel secure and gave me a stalwart "Rock of Gibraltar" to depend on. I was used to having him around and I thought George Reeves as Superman would go on forever. But he didn't… and the show eventually went off the air.

A few years later at the dawn of the '60s (still smarting from the loss of the TV program) I was watching the newly-released film "Cleopatra" (starring Taylor and Burton) when Reeves surprised me with a bit part. He was did a short "walk-on" in a Roman soldier's uniform… and then was gone from the screen forever. In my hometown theater (like so many others across the country) viewers audibly whispered "look… that's Superman." It was that universal recognition that ended Reeve's career. That was the last time I saw the Man of Steel. You know the story… Reeves later died and the newspapers had a field day with headlines like "Superman Commits Suicide." I wasn't confused about Clark anymore, I was just sad and I joined the legion of kids (many now teens) all over the country who mourned the passing of a friend… and the loss of an important brick in the social foundation of 1950's culture.

While others might give other Superman hallmarks higher acclaim on the occasion of his 60th birthday… I look back to the 1950's TV series with the greatest affection, perhaps because of the reassuringly assertive Clark Kent…and that neat coal-into-diamond trick. In a strange way I suppose, we young TV fans were really the coal, and the positive role that Reeves' characterization modeled for us was a noble attempt to shape a generation… into diamonds.

Gary

Gary M. Carter

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

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Atomic Comic Search

Hello CBM. I am working on a documentary for Public Television about the Hydrogen Bomb, and I found the atomic age comics depicted in CBM #46, April 1997, fascinating. I would very much like to use some of those images in our film, but I am having trouble tracking down hard copies of the original comics. Our deadline is approaching fast, so I need to locate the images in the very near future. In particular, I am looking for the Atomic War! title, the World War III title and Picture Parade #1 (Sept 1953).

I am also looking for comic books from the 1950s that make mention of surprise attack in their inside panels. If any CBM readers might be willing to help, or think they can help me in the search, I would love to hear from them. I can be reached at (617) 489-8686 or via e-mail at: sgrimberg@worldnet.att.net

Sharon Grimberg, Massachusetts

How about it CBMers? Would any of you be willing to help Sharon with this exciting Public Broadcasting documentary? Who knows… you might even be listed in the rolling credits at the end of the program!

Over-used hyperbole

The interview with Stan "The Man" Lee (CBM #61) was wonderful. Mr. Lee is obviously in love with life, and his optimistic enthusiasm is truly refreshing in this cynical age we live in. The tales he penned at Marvel from 1961-72 are widely regarded as comic classics, much to the chagrin of his detractors. While the term "legend" has become over-used hyperbole, to call Stan Lee a legend is an understatement.

The first books I ever read, outside of school, were Marvel comics written by Stan Lee in collaboration with such imaginative artists as Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and Gene Colan. Within these colorful 12¢ treasures were fantastic tales that held me in awe and profoundly influenced my life. I became an avid reader, and as a teenager discovered the incredible prose of Bradbury, Matheson, Bloch, Wells, Poe, Lovecraft, et al. Today, at the age of forty-one I remain an incurable bibliophile, but my bookish ways first took root with those Marvelous comics I encountered as an impressionable lad in the 1960s. Stan Lee was the spark that ignited my lifelong passion for books, literature and ideas.

A thousand words cannot adequately express my gratitude, so I will say it with five simple words: Thank you, Mr. Stan Lee.

Timothy M. Walters, Oklahoma

The fact is…

In your Comic Book Marketplace #61, July 1998, page 45, Stan Lee talks about "… a very famous scene…" of the trapped Spider-Man lifting heavy machinery over his head.

The drama of that sequence was first commented on and popularized by Gil Kane.

Stan says "I just mentioned the idea… I hadn't thought of devoting that many pages to it…"

I was publicly credited as plotter only starting with issue #26. The lifting sequence is in issue #33.

The fact is we had no story or idea discussion about some Spider-Man books even before issue #26 up to when I left the book.

Stan never knew what was in my plotted stories until I took in the penciled story, the cover, my script and Sol Brodsky took the material from me and took it all into Stan's office, so I had to leave without seeing or talking to Stan.

Steve Ditko, New York

Not Bob Lubbers

Received CBM #60 the other day and just wanted to make a couple of comments. First of all, I thought Tony Gleeson's article on the Blackhawks was very informative and well-written. By the way, many years ago I interviewed Charles "Chuck" Cuidera on tape for about three hours, and one of the interesting little anecdotes he told me was that when the Blackhawk Columbia serial made its debut in New York City, Quality publisher Everett "Busy" Arnold, took Reed Crandall and Cuidera down to the theatre for a special private showing. One can only imagine the pride those guys felt seeing their beloved character up on the big screen.

Your cover for CBM #60, utilizing the cover from Planet Comics #44 was incorrectly credited

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to Bob Lubbers. Lubbers never did any covers that I know of for Planet, although he did provide many fine covers for Wings and Rangers, and was one of the few to sign his covers as well. The Planet #44 cover was done by the prolific Joe Doolin, who usually didn't sign his covers, and was probably considered to be Fiction House's most used artist on covers during the mid 1940s. Doolin is an artist I'd like to track down more information on. If any CBM readers out there have any details about him, please contact me via CBM.

Thanks and keep 'em coming!

Roger Hill, Kansas

Whoops…you are so right Roger… and all the credit for the error lies squarely on the shoulders of Ye Editor, not with the author. Thanks for helping us keep the record straight.

Reform School Romance

Just got new CBM (#61)… and thought I'd mention a couple of minor details regarding Bill Jenks' Romance article. He didn't list Reform School Girl—it is a romance comic book. And also on that chart on page 64, I could see that you need to drop down on the bottom for two things: Strange Confessions was the one that's scarce and the Baker cover art is for Teenage Temptations as I know there is no Baker in Strange Confessions. Best wishes,

Ron Pussell (Redbeard), Nevada

Enduring and endearing

Met Stan Lee at a comic store in Nashville during a signing a couple of years ago and I was impressed by his affable demeanor and the personal attention he gave to the hundreds of people waiting in line to get an autograph and talk to "The Man." My wife says he looks and sounds like my late father so I have another reason to admire the eloquent Mr. Lee.

I, for one, am tired of reading about artists who helped create the "Marvel Age of Comics" down play Stan's role in the formation of said age. Comics are a visual medium and it's natural to give artists credit for a great book or series. Being a great fan of Kirby and Ditko, I too was "blown away" by their illustrative masterpieces. However, it was Stan's dialogue that gave personalities to Marvel's characters and made them so enduring and endearing. The synergistic relationship between writer and artist is what made the Marvel Age so special. One only has to read Kirby's post-Marvel stories (although I enjoyed them and read his sometimes stilted and melodramatic dialogue to wish his Fourth World stories had been done at Marvel with Stan supplying his wordsmithing skills). Post-Marvel, I felt Ditko's art became uninspired as he emphasized his philosophical leanings over a cohesive final product. Although Spider-Man changed drastically after he left (and I must say I preferred his version), nonetheless Spider-Man became the #1 selling comic after he was gone. Stan too had his share of mishaps after these gifted creators left, but overall Marvel Comics continues to thrive with him at the helm.

Thank you Stan for some of the best books of my life and thank you Bob Brodsky for such a great interview!

Eric G. Blackmore, Tennessee

At best unusable

After reading Stephen Gentner's article in "Speak Out!" in the July 1998 issue of CBM, I felt compelled to offer yet another opinion on this controversial matter of grading.

To begin with, the 21-point Gentner scale is at best unusable, at worst a dealer-driven absurdity. When I'm flipping through back issues at my local comics shop, or sifting through the thousands of issues on display at a convention, gradings like "FN-" and "GD/VF" come off to me as just what they are… advertising gimmicks to improve the comic's chances of being sold. I'm certainly not going to keep a mental list of 21 different possible values of the comics I'm collecting, for I know what every collector knows: there is, in working reality only 5 values worth discussing, and these are: NM, VF, FN, VF, GD.

"Mint" copies don't exist unless you're a publisher who sneaks down to the press room to pick up copies with tweezers and slip them into tissue-laced boxes. "Fair" copies are not worth collecting (OK, unless you find a Fair Action #2 in your great-grandmother's basement that begs to be sent to Ciccone for restoration). That leaves the big 5. Dealers who label comics GD/VG are saying that it's really a GD comic, but hope a buyer will think it MIGHT be a VG one.

Three rules of thumb for the average collector, regarding grading:

1) If there's two gradings, pick the one that comes first (A FN/VF is really a FN); 2) If there's a minus, the comic is the next category down

(VG- is really GD); 3) Ignore all pluses (FN+ is FN, pure and simple).

The Overstreet Grading Guide is clear enough on these 5 categories, although they (Bob and Gary) spent too much time on Mint comics. The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide, however, is not so clear when it comes to the pricing differences. Example: I collect Tomb of Dracula. The 1998 Overstreet Guide tells me that issue #3 in NM is $30, with FN 30% and GD 10% of that value. Fair enough. But then they tell me that issue #14, at $15 in NM, has a FN value of 36.6% and GD value of 12.3% of that price.

Why these small differences in FN and GD percentage for issues that are numerically close together, in the same run? Surely Tomb of Dracula does not call for THAT much distinction in pricing. This kind of illogical, useless in the real world pricing structure causes things like the Gentner scale to be created. Overstreet is as much an instigator of these problems as anyone. How about a clear-cut, across-the-board percentage structure, at least for the different Ages? If dealers could agree on limiting themselves to these grading categories, and develop an iron-clad pricing scale to go with them, I wager back-issue sales would go up.

Eric Martin, Illinois

As co-author of the Overstreet Grading Guide, I share the responsibility for the length of the "Mint" section. In hind sight it may have been a bit lengthy, but as I recall we were trying to show a substantial population of ultra-high grade material, because we felt that very little of it had been shown in previous publications. As for "Mint" copies not existing, I hold a different view. I have had the privilege of seeing many specimens (usually in private collections) that were truly Mint. In fact, a good 10-12% of the comics from the original Edgar Church Collection (Mile High) have been evaluated by some of the best (and strictest) graders in the hobby as genuine Mint copies. Finally, I feel the same frustration that you feel regarding "combination grades" and have been a vocal opponent of their use since they initially came into use. In contrast to my opposition to combination grades, I actively use "+" and "-" as a way of "fine tuning" nomenclature grades. But hey . . . all of our different opinions makes the hobby go 'round. Thanks for sharing yours!

Black cover Strange Adv.

Loved your last issue, especially the back cover feature on French reprints of DC science fiction comics. I had never seen the cover of Strange Adventures #93, and it suggests another feature that you could run for the cover gallery. We all know that there are some beautiful black covers for the Mystery in Space series; what about showing us some black covers from Strange Adventures? I would nominate #93, 96 and 150!

Aaron Manson, New York

Great idea! Will you put the article together?

Letter from Ireland

Just a short note to say how much I appreciate CBM. Your strategy of presenting features about well-known and much-loved series alongside those about obscure-but-worthy comics makes for a magazine I find hard to put down. I am particularly impressed by the consistently high quality of CBM. It's clear that you (and your associates and contributors) work hard to ensure that it is the best magazine for comics collectors around—maybe even the finest one since Alter Ego. Best,

Ed Hatton, Dublin, Ireland

Denis Kitchen on Spirit Sections

Have an old annoying Spirit-related topic that came back to mind after being copied on the E-mail re an upcoming CBM Spirit feature. Years ago (ten? twelve?) I was looking at the newest Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide, analyzing the section with the "Top 50 Titles," in terms of total guide value. I noticed that the original Spirit sections were not on the list, and it surprised me. Being a curious and self-interested publisher, I took that same edition of Overstreet and tediously added up the total value of a mint set of Spirit sections. To my astonishment, it was a substantial amount (no longer in my memory) placing a set of Spirit, at that point in time, right behind Donald Duck, as I recall, in the top 10 or 15 Titles. I had caught a significant omission!

Proud of myself, I wrote Bob Overstreet. He told me that Robert Crestohl had provided those statistics and invited me to complain to him. I did.

I was first told that no one had ever added up the Spirit, which dumfounded me. I then pointed out that "I" had just added up Overstreet's Spirit numbers and they were very impressive. I then said I assumed this would be reflected in his tally in the next Overstreet market report. I think I got a vague yes.

Forgive me for not recalling offhand if this was a phone call or a letter but I then was informed that the Spirit would NOT be listed in the next Top 50— "because it was not a REAL comic book." (!!!)

Now I understand that a "real" comic book is supposed to have a slick enamel cover wrapped

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around its newsprint interior. But there are lots of giveaway and other newsprint-only titles listed in the Overstreet "COMIC BOOK" Price Guide. I pointed this out, noting that it was all the more remarkable that an 8 or 16 page newsprint giveaway comic book should attain such longevity and value. But it fell on deaf ears.

So I thought I'd raise this point in CBM and see how collectors feel about the Spirit sections, their place in fandom, and whether they should be in the Guide. See you....

Denis Kitchen, Massachusetts

Thanks for raising the point... it is long overdue. I've always felt that the collectibility of Sprit Sections has clearly been established over the years... they are incredibly well done, old (as paper collectibles go), and not all that easy to find. As to weather they are "comic books" or not, the debate usually revolves around the fact that Spirit Sections were initially distributed in newspapers. But this method of distribution does not alter the fact that they are clearly comic books (albeit "self-cover" or "paper cover"). Even Will Eisner has referred to the Spirit Sections as comic books during several Golden Age panels over the years... and his opinion on the matter surely counts for something. Perhaps other long-time collectors and fans will share their opinions with us here in the letter column, especially those who have a different view.

Hobby first, investment second

Read, with interest, your response to Michael Lee's letter in CBM #60. I too feel that articles on investing in comics have a place in CBM. Whether we like it or not, money is a key factor in our hobby and comic book values must be addressed. I feel everyone should have a working knowledge of comic book values. It's great that people want to promote collecting comics 'just for the fun of it,' but the bottom line is everybody has to pay for that 'fun.' Exploring all aspects of collecting and investing is a must for a magazine like CBM. Many, myself included, whose motto is 'hobby first, investment second' use the investment side of comics to generate cash to continue collecting. Some people couldn't collect comics at all if they couldn't make money in this manner, therefore being in-the-know is vital.

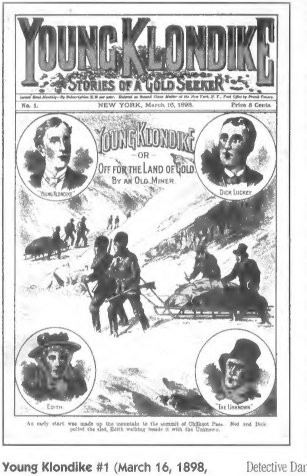
As you can see, I look forward to my monthly 'fix' of CBM and I'm never disappointed by what each issue brings. Keep up the great work. 'Til next time, make mine CBM!

Sterling Dashiell, Virginia

Dobie and Archie

Seems Dobie Gillis and Archie Andrews heavily inspired each other! In early Archie, he was known to contemplate by a thinker statue! (Just as Dobie did.) Both Archie and Dobie had a rather lazy and counterculture sidekick—Jughead vs. Maynard. Each lead character had feelings for a rich beauty—Veronica vs. Thelma. The less flashy Betty and Zelda were the ones truly loving our heroes! The entire setting and soda shop sort of theme is pervasive in Dobie, Archie... and Happy Days.

Richard M. Brown, Michigan



Young Klondike #1 (March 16, 1898, Frank Tousey, Publisher, New York, NY)

Young Klondike #1

Attending the Grand Rapids Car Show and Flea Market here in Minnesota in late July, I purchased this copy of Young Klondike #1 from pulp expert Gordon Gee for $15. An obvious precursor to the modern-day comic book complete with #1 issue number, March 16, 1898 date, 5¢ cover price and red title logo, Young Klondike #1 introduces readers to the story's four main characters on the two-color (red and yellow) paper cover.

Measuring 8 ¾" x 11 ¾", Young Klondike #1 is a 32-page text story of the adventures of Young Klondike, Dick Luckey, Edith, and a mysterious fellow referred to only as "The Unknown." The cover layout was most certainly an influence on Classics Illustrated's The Three Musketeers #1 and Ivanhoe #2 from 1941.

If The Yellow Kid In McFadden's Flats from 1897 is considered the first comic book, perhaps Young Klondike #1 may be the second. What an exciting find....

John Mlachnik, Minnesota

Police Car Sleeper?

Was reading through CBM #62 and came across John Mlachnik's letter commenting on Knock Knock #1 being the first Whitman comic book, predating Mammoth Comics #1 by two full years. John goes on to point out that he thinks Knock Knock Who's There #1 (1936) is the first Whitman comic book, which measures 8 x 9. But there is another, much earlier, Whitman comic book which cries out on several fronts for recognition at long last.

A little background: for years the general consensus was that New Fun #1 (Feb 1935) was the first comic book to contain original material devised especially for publication in the venue it was presented in. It sounded exotic that the longest lived comic book company was first on the stands with original material. It measures 10" x 15", as you well know—not quite "normal" comic book size as a consensus places Famous Funnies to be.

Then we re-discovered the output of Humor Publishing Company (see CBM #36) with their seminal Detective Dan, Adventures of Detective Ace King and the newly re-discovered Bob Scully, Two Fisted Hick Detective which measures the same 9 ½" x 12" as its slightly more well-known brethren. (It, also came out in 1933, was created by Howard Dell and is all original material.)

What is amazing is Jules Feiffer mentioned Detective Dan, the comic book title quoted by Jerry Siegel as "what really got Joe and me interested in getting into the field (of) comic books...", on page 14 of his seminal The Great Comic Book Heroes back in 1965 in the same sentence as Dell's 1929 The Funnies and New Fun (1935) and none of us comics historians ever picked up on this staring us in the face for 30 years.

There is another "missing link" as the earliest Whitman comic book I *(Continued on page 74)*

RARE COMIC CHARACTER PREMIUMS

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By Pat S. Calhoun

Journey Into... Post-Code Worlds!

The comic book industry endured much diminishment and many changes in late 1954 and early 1955 as the Comics Code Authority implemented its censorship program. A host of established companies shut down their comics lines as did most of the smaller "boom" publishers of the early 1950s. Atlas was actually able to expand their fantasy line in 1956, filling the void left by all the departed purveyors of the strange and supernatural.

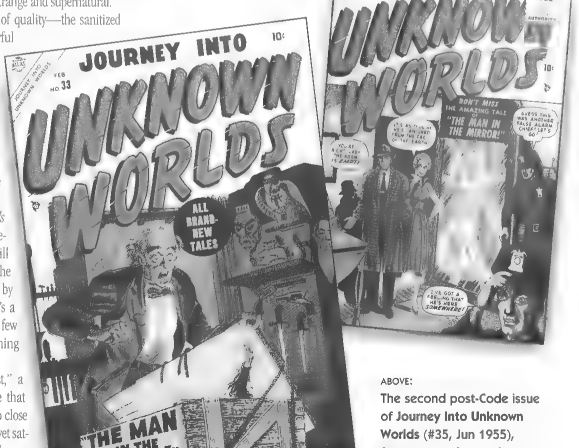
But even Atlas suffered in terms of quality—the sanitized suspense was pale without the colorful possibilities that horror and terror added. On the plus-side, Atlas was able to employ some fine artists made available by the demise of other publishers. A close look at three issues of a major Atlas fantasy title as it "rounds the bend" from pre-Code to post-Code will illustrate how they handled the wild ride.

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #33 (February 1955) is the last pre-Code issue. The cover looks like Bill Benulis' work, and the first story, "The Man In The Box" is definitely drawn by him, signed with inker Jack Abel. It's a gentle fable about a man only a few inches tall; already Atlas was toning down most of their product.

The second story is "Bomb Blast," a fast-paced yarn about a submarine that gets blown back in time by being too close to an H-Bomb explosion. It's simple yet satisfying, with a good deal of the pleasure coming from the art of the underappreciated Manny Stallman.

The third story is one the Code would probably have blackballed, a "Death Row" story—awesomely illustrated by Lou Cameron. The death row subgenre was a pre-Code Atlas specialty where always it seemed the murderer would escape before walking the last mile, but... This one's a little different in that the whole point is not knowing till the end that the convict—who is exchanging letters with an alien that he mails by pressing them against the stone wall of his cell until they disappear—is scheduled to die. Cameron is

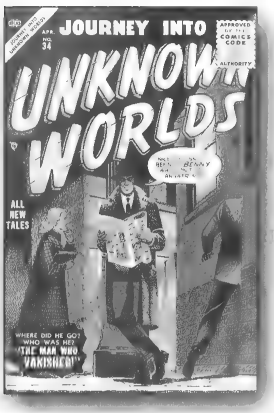
BELOW LEFT:
Journey Into Unknown Worlds #33 (Feb 1955) was the last pre-Code issue.



ABOVE:
The second post-Code issue of Journey Into Unknown Worlds (#35, Jun 1955), features two fun stories with fabulous art by "MAD"-men, Mort Drucker and Angelo Torres.

one of those "inherited" artists, who had been doing excellent work for Ace, but they were in the process of terminating their fantasy titles.

The other two tales are fillers, although "Those Who Listen" does offer the unique rendering talents of Howie Post. Still, "Pen Pal" (the death row chiller) is priceless and makes this a worthwhile issue.


JOURNEY INTO
UNKNOWN WORLDS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ALL NEW TALES
WHERE DID HE GO? WHO WAS HE? "THE MAN WHO VANISHED"

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #34 (Apr 1955) contains the classic story "The Man Who Vanished," superbly drawn by Joe Kubert.

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #34 (April 1955) starts slowly, with a so-so cover and a cloyingly sentimental and predictable opener, but the second story, "Personality Zero," is actually pretty subtle satire of the "self-help" school, as a weak meek Martian spy takes enough improvement courses to turn himself into a superman/superMartian, paving the way for an alien invasion. Paul Reinman's art manages a pleasing "fifties moderne" style.

Next up is a story about dreams that's pretty thin plotwise, but does mark the beginning of Angelo Torres' (who'd gotten a start with the moribund EC comics) elegant work for Atlas.

The fourth entry, "Double or Nothing," is a slick sci-fi fable about interplanetary explorers who land on a world where each object has a deadly duplicate.

The last story, "The Man Who Vanished," is one of the great Atlas stories, masterfully soaring past the restrictions of the Code (this is the first ish with the approval stamp) to achieve a quiet offstage horror that is memorably effective. It's a "deal with the Devil" yarn that focuses on a character who signs away his soul on a dare, but then sees the man who dared him vanish and begins to wonder if he hasn't condemned himself to an eternity of torment. The mood of mythic menace is maximized by the graphic resources of the redoubtable Joe Kubert.

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #35's (June 1955) cover again shows the mollified approach to fantasy that the Code demanded. The insides are also muted, steering clear of any graphic violence and ghastliness. But good tales could still be told…

"The Masters" is a low-impact "first contact" story about aliens encountering dogs that passes muster mostly because of superior rendering by Mort Drucker. The second story is a curious take on the curse of good luck, with Reinman giving a suitable suburban flavor to the art.

The cover story comes next, and "The Man in the Mirror" is an absurd little vignette that's quite enjoyable, with just enough "plot" to weave four pages of nicely expressive images into a coherent whole, with a rewarding futuristic city-scape in the last panel.

Angelo Torres returns, drawing "Johnny's Flying Saucer," and this time there's a wonderful story to merge with the inspired art into that marvel we call comics. Young Johnny is unhappy about having to rake a yard full of fallen leaves, but then a UFO lands among them—creating a distraction that puts the job on hold…

The last story is a saccharine ghost gig of no great shakes, but it adds up to a pretty fair package as four-color fantasy felt its way towards assessing the audience in the brave new world of post-Code comics. It would (with business complications factored in) take Atlas almost four more years to devise a fresh approach, targeted at younger readers, with what would become known as the monster comics of pre-hero Marvel and a vital part of the early Silver Age.

Pat Calhoun has been collecting, researching and appreciating comic books since the early 1960s, and is a nationally recognized comic book historian. Originally a Coronadan, Pat and his family now reside in Santa Rosa.

COMING NEXT MONTH IN CBM

Those Amazing Silver Age Mutants
The X-Men & Doom Patrol!

Plus: He started it all…
Golden Age Robotman!

By Michelle Nolan

Missing in Action!

The super mystery of why certain issues are uncommon

Let's say you're a millionaire and you want to collect a complete run of *Action Comics*. At this point, certain cynics in the audience might say it would take a millionaire to collect a complete run of *Action Comics*. After all, the first 10 issues alone would run you a cool $300,000 or so in VF to NM condition, if you could find them in high grade.

But let's pretend you have all the cash you need for your fill of *Action*. Even if you had all the dealers in the country going into action for you, I'll bet you would be able to find the first 100 issues faster than the second hundred. And I'll bet that you would have a surprisingly difficult time finding #204-210, too—especially in beautiful condition.

Of course, many of the high-end dealers for years have specialized in early issues of *Action*, since the big money is there along with demand from high-end collectors.

But, in a strange way for a comic featuring the icon Superman, the 1950's issues of *Action*, especially the first three dozen or so post-Code issues, are surprisingly difficult to find.

Don't believe me? Just for fun, check all the ads and dealers' lists you see in the next few months, and see how many 1950's issues of *Action* turn up.

That's why *CBM* editor Gary Carter—who yields to no man in his desire for *Action* (do you think he'll allow me that truly awful pun?)—asked me to take action on this topic for this special issue celebrating Superman.

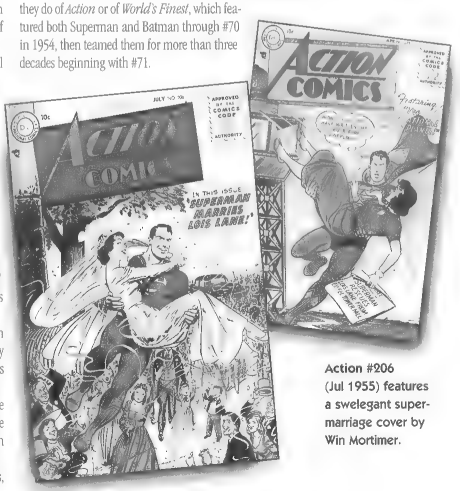
Hey, for an unrepentant punster like me, I can't resist some of this nonsense. But, seriously folks, *Action Comics* are a true mystery for collectors, and have been ever since people began paying attention to the series in a big way during the 1960s.

If you're a DC fan, and if you attend a lot of conventions, take your *Gerber Photo-Journal* off the shelf and check out the covers of *Action*. How many of these have you seen in person? When was the last time, if ever, you've seen certain issues?

Sales figures for the 1950s are generally unavailable, yet we know that most DC comics featuring Superman and Batman sold well over half a million issues apiece. And that surely includes *Action*.

Even so, I'll bet the sales of *Superman* in the 1950s usually nearly doubled those of *Action*, and the reason is simple: the mere title of the Superman television show, which ran five seasons from February 1953 through 1957 before going into endless reruns (reruns began earlier than 1957, of course, since *The Adventures of Superman* was one of the most popular syndicated shows of all time).

Collectors see many more 1950's issues of Superman than they do of *Action* or of *World's Finest*, which featured both Superman and Batman through #70 in 1954, then teamed them for more than three decades beginning with #71.



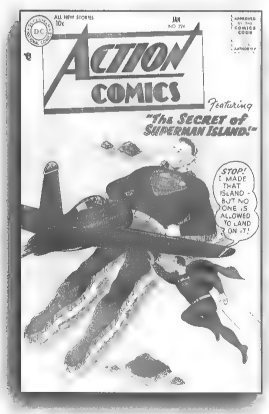
Action #203 (Apr 1955) is the second issue to bear the Comics Code stamp in the upper right corner and is one of the harder-to-find 1950's Actions.

Action #206 (Jul 1955) features a swelegant super-marriage cover by Win Mortimer.

World's Finest, though, has its own reasons for being uncommon during its run it the early 1950s. Both *World's Finest* and the funny animal anthology title *Comic Cavalcade* apparently had trouble selling at 15¢, even though both boasted page counts of 76 and later 68 pages through the first half of 1954. (Unlike *World's Finest*, *Comic Cavalcade* ended publication in 1954 with #63, which is one of the scarcest of all DC issues. It took me forever to find a copy.)

Ye Editor's theory—and I agree with it—is that when kids sought out Superman in the comics, or asked their parents for his adventures, an awful lot of issues of *Action* were either overlooked or passed over because they contained only one Superman story.

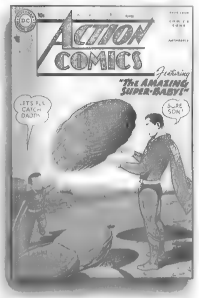
Other than Superman, *Action* was not an overly compelling comic throughout most of the 1950s. Until its page count was cut from 44 to 36 (including covers) with #197 (October 1954), *Action* featured the pedestrian African hero Congo Bill, the pedestrian modern Western costume hero Vigilante and the pedestrian futuristic hero Tommy Tomorrow (albeit with beautiful art by Jim Mooney on some Tommy Tomorrow tales).



Action #224 (Jan 1957) starts the year with a typical DC puzzler, "The Secret of Superman Island."

Until revived many years later, Vigilante bowed out in #198 (November 1954), making him one of the last of DC's Golden Age survivors to depart. At the same time, Johnny Quick flashed off to his Golden Age case in *Adventure Comics* #207 (December 1954). Robotman last clanked about in *Detective* #202 (December 1953), replaced by one of DC's least-known costumed heroes, Mysto the Magician Detective, who ran only from #203 to #212 (October 1954) except for not appearing in #206.

In fact, the only all-superhero anthology comic in the 1950s was *Adventures Comics*, with Superboy, Green Arrow, Aquaman and Johnny Quick. Those are wonderful issues, so much better than most issues of *Action*! For my money, too, *Detective Comics* also was better, what with the wonderful Western strip Pow Wow Smith through 1953, Ruben Moreira's beautiful TV detective Roy Raymond throughout the 1950s, and the unique Martian Manhunter beginning with #225 (November 1955).



Superdad and the Infant of Steel in "The Amazing Super-Baby" (#217, Jun 1956).

Yet *Action* also has its merits, if only because issues can be so challenging to find. And the Superman stories are uniformly excellent. They are usually plot-driven and, for the most part, are not generally infested with the "Weisinger Wisdom" that began with the introduction of Brainiac in *Action* #242 (July 1958).

Most of the Superman stories in *Action* from #140 (January 1950) through #214 (June 1958) stand alone. There is minimal attempt at continuity, although Kryptonite did come to play an increasing role in the stories after its comic-book introduction in *Superman* #61 (November/December 1949), which distantly followed the menacing mineral's debut on the Superman radio series.

There is one unique early attempt at a two-part story involving synthetic Kryptonite in *Action* #141 and 142 (February and March 1950). The first story is entitled "Luthor's Secret Weapon" and the second tale (sans Luthor) is entitled "The Conquest of Superman."

Luthor, who was used with regularity in Superman's own title, appeared in only a handful of further stories up through #241—#146 ("The Statues That Came to Life"), #151 ("Superman's Super Magic Show" with the Prankster and the Toyman, two of the worst villains in comic book history), #156 (the last Golden Age appearance of Super Lois Lane in "The Girl of Steel"), #183 ("The Perfect Plot to Kill Superman"), #197 ("The Phantom Superman"), #210 ("Superman in Superman Land") and #236 ("Superman's New Uniform").

I may have overlooked one or two Luthor tales, but he wasn't in *Action* very often in the 1950s.

Evidence of Weisinger's penchant for "untold tales" appears as early as the charming story in *Action* #144 (May 1950), "Clark Kent's Career." This is one of the best of all early Superman stories.

Another of my favorite tales is in #147 (August 1950), "Superman becomes Miss Lovelorn." That one is about Clark Kent's success as an advisor to the lovelorn columnist and how the job eventually winds up in the lap of Lois. It's about as much fun as a Golden Age story can be.

There was a sense of whimsy in several more of the early 1950's Superman stories in *Action*. This is ironic, because at the time the television series (the first 26 episodes of which were filmed more than a year before it was officially released) was as grim as any so-called children's show could possibly be.

The first 26 episodes (the entire 1953 season, including the

two that originally were the short 1951 feature film *Superman and the Mole Men*) were a thoroughly gritty portrayal of Superman. He might as well have been dubbed "The American Avenger," because he was the nemesis of crime personified. They are great television!

Then, DC Comics editor Whitney Ellsworth took over production of the series in 1953 (supervising the final 78 episodes). Ellsworth gradually lightened the tone until most of the final 52 episodes (the ones filmed in color) were basically kiddie shows.

In contrast, the Superman stories in *Action*—published at the same time were almost entirely devoid of camp of kiddie elements. They were darned good tales of the Man of Steel, especially stories like "The Return of Planet Krypton" in #182 (July 1953), "The Haunted Superman" in #186 (November 1953), "Calling Doctor Superman" in #191 (April 1954), "The Outlaws from Krypton" in #194 (July 1954), "Lois Lane—Wanted" in #195 (August 1954), "The Stolen S Shirts" in #197 (October 1954) and "The Six Lives of Lois Lane" in #198 (November 1954).

That brings us to the surprisingly uncommon issues of the post-Code period. Gerber's scarcity index lists *Action* #151-190 as a rating 6, meaning only 50-200 issues supposedly exist. A smattering of these may be scarce, but not that many.

In contrast, issues #140-150 and #191-210 are rated a 5 (200-1,000 copies extant) and issues #211-241 are given a 4 (average scarcity, 1,000 to 2,000 copies extant).

I would say the 5s are pretty close to the mark, most of the 6s are really 5s, and most of the 4s are actually 5s as well. Many of those issues from #211-241 are very difficult to obtain and some are almost never seen.

Gerber did such a monumental and much-to-be-admired job that he can hardly be faulted on any one such long-running title. But obviously some numbers within a given run seem likely to be less common than others. For example, it would seem highly unlikely that all 40 issues of the #151-190 run have the same true relative scarcity, although we'll never know for sure.

By the way, isn't it unfortunate that true circulation figures of most comics of the 1934-59 era are not available to the public, if they ever were? Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a complete list? Or am I missing something? If such information is ever released, it will make fascinating reading.

At any rate, just for fun I've done some speculation on the scarcest 20 issues of *Action* in the run between #140 and 241, based purely on my instincts as one who has collected the entire run and has attended well over 100 conventions over the past 30-plus years.

I stopped at #241 because that is basically the last issue before the true beginning of the Silver Age in *Action*, which really started with Brainiac and the bottle city of Kandor in #242 and, of course, gained full impetus with the introduction of Supergirl in #252 (May 1959).

However, I don't pretend to know in what order I should list them. I tried to list the least common 10 first (again, in no particular order). It would be fun to hear your opinions. That's what makes this hobby (and *CBM*) so much fun!

For such a long-running title, there is a remarkable lack of *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* variation on *Action* in the 1950s. The GD values start at $43 for #140 and extend down to $17 for #241, with only one issue skewing the curve— #158 (an origin recap with the title "The Kid from Krypton") at $97 in GD. For whatever it's worth, I think that's way overvalued unless you believe that *Superman* #61 (again, the first Kryptonite story in comics and a much better origin recap) is way undervalued at $105.

So—what is the least common issue (I hesitate to say rare) of *Action* from #140-241? For my money it's #178 (March 1953) with the Superman story entitled "The Sandman of Crime." The story title is ironic, of course, since I can't think of another occasion on which DC took the name of one of its Golden Age heroes and gave it to a villain.

Incidentally, one of the real oddities of *Action Comics* is

CBM CHECKLIST

Scarcest Action Comics

Michelle Nolan's speculation on the 20 scarcest issues of *Action Comics* between #140 (January 1950) and #241 (June 1958), along with the titles of the Superman stories. The first 10 listed are the least common (in no particular order except for the first listing).

Scarcest 10

Action #178 (March 1953)
"The Sandman of Crime"
Action #188 (January 1954)
"The Spectral Superman"
Action #161 (October 1951)
"Exit—Superman"
Action #194 (July 1954)
"The Outlaws from Krypton"
Action #195 (August 1954)
"Lois Lane—Wanted"
Action #212 (January 1956)
"The Superman Calendar"
Action #207 (August 1955)
"The Four Superman Medals"
Action #203 (April 1955)
"The International Daily Planet"
Action #219 (August 1956)
"Superman's Treasure Hoard"
Action #200 (January 1955)
"Test of a Warrior"

Next Scarcest 10

Action #155 (April 1951)
"The Cover Girl Mystery"
Action #156 (May 1951)
"The Girl of Steel"
Action #162 (November 1951)
"Superman vs. It"
Action #165 (February 1952)
"Man Who Conquered Superman"
Action #176 (January 1953)
"Muscles for Money"
Action #180 (May 1953)
"The Super Telethon"
Action #186 (November 1953)
"The Haunted Superman"
Action #217 (June 1956)
"The Amazing Superbaby"
Action #221 (October 1956)
"Superman's New Power"
Action #230 (August 1957)
"Superman Loses His Powers"

how small a role Jimmy Olsen plays on the covers of #140-241 and even in the stories until the post-Brantiac period. Lois Lane appears on the cover and in the story titles time after time, yet Jimmy is prominently cover featured only on #231 (August 1957).

Apparently, the editors felt that Jimmy's own title *Superman's Pal*, which began in 1954, needed no sales push from other Superman family titles. Indeed, Jimmy played a much larger role in the television series after Whitney Ellsworth took over as producer, apparently feeling that the character would appeal strongly to young boys.

DC
10¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ACTION COMICS
Featuring "The SUPERMAN SATELLITE!"
HELP! S SUPERMAN! HE'S BECOME A SATELLITE DOOMED TO CIRCLE EARTH FOREVER!

Action #229 (Jun 1957) offers a classic DC SF Supe story, "The Superman Satellite," for Supe's 19th anniversary ish.

I've always believed that Jimmy was given his own comic book title because of his prominence on the TV series, as portrayed by the best actor in the series—Jack Larson. Just try to imagine how tough it would be to say most of those lines reserved for Jimmy if you weren't one heck of a fine actor! "Jeepers, Superman! I never have any fun!"

Gary M. Carter recently told me how much he loves those 1955-58 issues of *Action*. I don't know which ones he would list, but here are my favorites from the post-Code run of #202-241:

"The International Daily Planet" in #203; "Superman Marries Lois Lane" in #206; "Paul Paxton, Alias Superman" in #213; "The Superman of Tomorrow" in #215; "The Amazing Super Baby" in #217 (though, title notwithstanding, this is not the first Superbaby story!); "Superman's Treasure Hoard" in #219; "The Interplanetary Olympics" in #220; "The Duplicate Superman" in #222; "The First Superman of Krypton" in #223; "The Secret of Superman Island" in #224; "The Invulnerable Enemy" in #226; "The Superman Satellite" in #229; "Superman, Junior" in #232; "The Super Prisoner of Amazon Island" in #235; and "The Superman Sphinx" in #240.

Any of these stories will demonstrate vividly how ingenious, stand-alone Superman stories were the best. They are all wonderfully entertaining hokum.

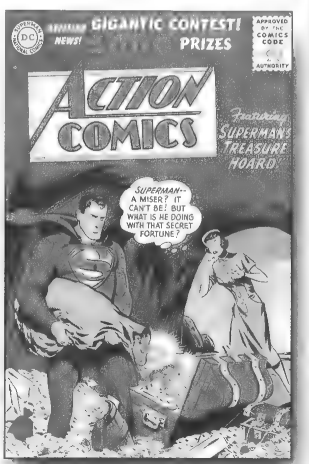
I must confess a world of nostalgia for *Action*, for that is a title I rarely passed up as a child. The Supergirl debut issue was the most [illegible] but I also will never forget being fascinated by the [illegible]-and-yellow cover by Wayne Boring for #219 (Aug [illegible]56), illustrating "Superman's Treasure Hoard." I guess I figured [illegible] and all those coins I could buy a lot more funny books!

For some crazy reason [illegible] remember thinking a crossover with Scrooge McDuck would be appropriate! (hardly). That was one of the first few comics I ever purchased with one of my scarce dimes, and to this day I can remember walking slowly home with it from a pharmacy about eight blocks from my home. Believe it or not, there were no fewer than eight outlets for comics within less than a half-mile of my home in that year, and I visited them all regularly!

I also recall impressing my third grade teacher Mrs. Crawford no end with my use of the word "invulnerable," cribbed directly from the title of #226. I guess she thought I was a child prodigy (no such luck!).

Since #219 was my first issue of *Action*, I remember how very difficult it was to find back issues of the previous numbers in the 200s. I found many of the issues below 200, but hardly anything from #201-218, lending credence to Ye Editor's belief in how relatively scarce these issues really are!

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.


DC
ANOTHER NEW!
GIGANTIC CONTEST! PRIZES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ACTION COMICS
Featuring SUPERMAN'S TREASURE HOARD!
SUPERMAN-- A MISER? IT CAN'T BE! BUT WHAT IS HE DOING WITH THAT SECRET FORTUNE?

In addition to being one of the scarce issues, Action #219 (Aug 1956) is also sought after by hobbyists who collect DCs with the "5000 Prizes" contest announcement on the cover.

Superman's Merfolk

BY MYLS PUTMAN

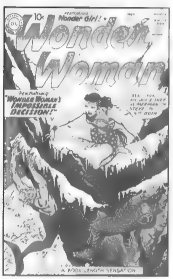
The mythos of the Superman Family during the Silver Age has many wonderful elements... including fantastic (if not) far-fetched plot devices and a marvelous universe of supporting characters. But for me the most fondly remembered of these supporting characters were the merfolk... a phenomena that seemed to especially manifest itself in the early 1960s.

These creatures entranced me at an early age... none more than the alluring and beautiful Lori Lemaris, mermaid. An appearance by her was always a delight, especially when she would be pleasingly rendered by the deft hand of Mr. Kurt Schaffenberger!

Ms. Lemaris's initial appearances in the Superman Family: Her debut, in *Superman* #129 ("The Girl in Superman's Past," May 1959), is the best-known and most reprinted, although somewhat overshadowed with Red kryptonite also debuting in the same issue, and copies of *Superman* #129 are highly valued for both these stories. However, I find Lori's second appearance in *Superman* #135 ("Superman's Sweet Mermaid," February 1960) a more satisfying yarn. This story includes a thorough flashback to *Superman* #129, but then proceeds further into the events that ultimately led to Lori's marriage to Ronal, complete with Superman briefly battling an atomic sea monster (in keeping with a need to inject some type of "action" plot device into the story). The inking on Wayne Boring's pencils in *Superman* #135 was also more flattering to Ms. Lemaris (and other females) in contrast to #129. It's a mystery why this (and the

next two stories she was featured in) was not reprinted subsequently in DC's 80-page Giant Superman collections, but it is the reference model for John Byrne's updating of Ms. Lemaris in 1987.

The last two original appearances of Lori in the Superman title are a study in contrasts. "The Mermaid from Atlantis" (*Superman* #138, July 1960) is a delightful romp, as Lori seeks to help Superman over his heartbreak at her marriage. She initiates all manner of schemes to get the Man of Steel to propose to Lois, and each one, predictably, backfires. The breezy, almost slapstick pace is reminiscent of the early Lois Lane stories. Yet a month later, it's Superman and Lori (along with Jimmy Olsen) who hatch a plot to get Lois married to millionaire Brett Rand. "The New Life of Super-Merman" (*Superman* #139, August 1960) generally has a more somber tone (complete with the apparent "death" of Ronal) and none of the giddiness of the preceding month's story. This contrast is typical of the writing in all four stories. Subtle differences between the dialogue between the two versions of how Clark met Lori (#129 and 135) lead me to speculate that there were other writers working under Mort Weisinger, besides Bill Finger, who each had a shot at composing a "LoriStory" during the initial run in Superman.



Three classic Silver Age Merfolk covers from the "house of tails"—Wonder Woman #118 (Nov 1960), Superman's Girl Friend, Lois Lane #97 (Nov 1969), and Superman #139 (Aug 1960).

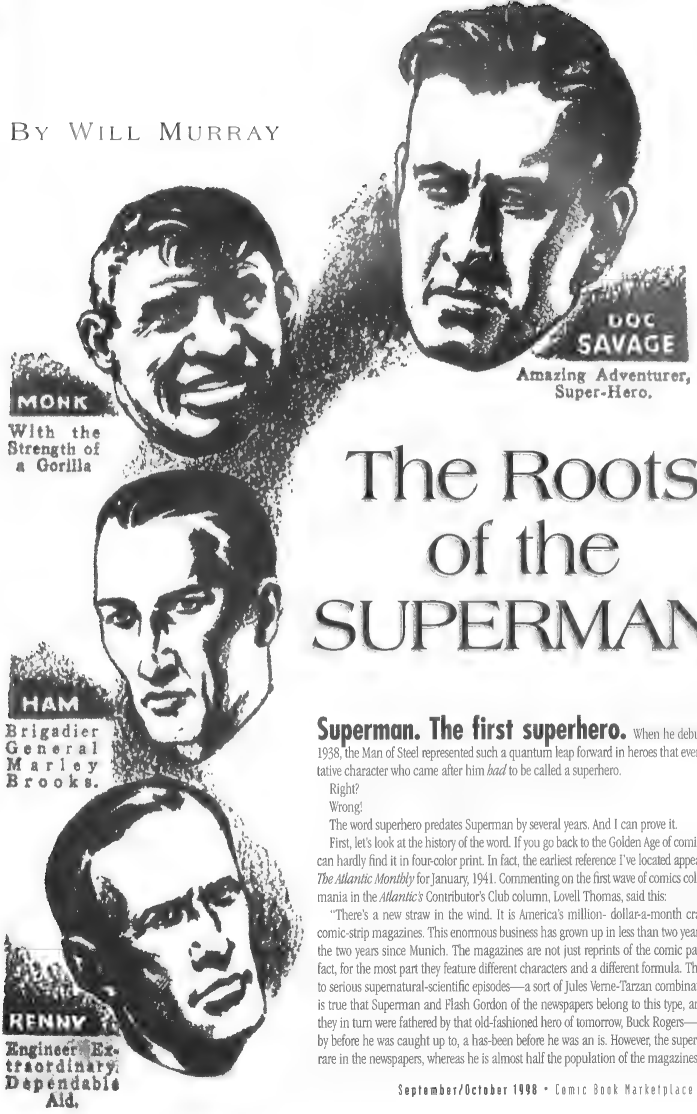
Two months later, Lori found a new home in the Supergirl series (*Action* #269, October 1960), although the focus here for the next few years would be upon Supergirl's "Merboy Sweetheart," Jerro, in a role-reversal twist to the Superman/Lori encounter. Lori also made several appearances in the Jimmy Olsen and Lois Lane titles. In time readers would also meet Lori's two sisters, Lenora (*Action* #284, February 1962) and Ina (*Lois Lane* #72, February 1967), and would learn the origins of Aquaman's merfolk of Atlantis in a Legion of Superheroes episode (*Adventure* #333, June 1965). There was probably enough material produced between 1958 and 1965 to have filled at least two 80-page "all-merfolk" Superman Giants (DC Comics: take note!)

It seems that this time period was especially fecund for comic book mermaid "tails" outside of the Superman "family." Bob Kanigher had added Manno, the merman, to the cast of the Wonder Woman series, along with the more generically-named "Mer-Boy" who visited often with Wonder Girl. They, along with Lori and company, were probably the only regular supporting "mer" characters to appear in any ongoing superhero comic series (or "family" of titles) published at the time. Other merfolk appearances occurred in titles such as *Sea Devils*, *Challengers of the Unknown*, and others. The competition also indulged themselves, particularly in several issues of ACG's Beyond the Unknown during this time. There was even a merman story published in one of the pre-hero Marvel titles that featured an early "try out" of Professor Xavier by Jack Kirby, complete with the bald scalp and wheelchair (reprinted later in *Tower of Shadows* #9). But in retrospect it seems a large proportion of the stories appeared in one DC title or another.

Transformation was a commonly-utilized story concept that was applied to virtually every member of the Superman "family" at one time or another, as exemplified in *Lois Lane* #14. The "SWAFT" (Super-character With A Fish Tail) imagery was frequently encountered. Red kryptonite was the culprit behind Supergirl's transformation into a Siren of Steel (*Action* #284, 1/62 [reprinted in *Action* #360]), which was effectively a modern update on the classic archetype of anima (feminine) energies. Reaching into the early 1970s, a renegade merman scientist was able to harness red sun energy to transform Superboy (#194, April 1973), so that Atlantis would have its own superhero. Wonder Girl is changed into a mermaid by the powers of Athena (*Wonder Woman* #147, July 1964) in order to experience life in Mer-Boy's world. Sometimes the change was simply a masquerade. Superman played the part in #139 and also in *Action* #270 (November 1960; reprinted in *Action* #341). Even Jimmy Olsen got in on the act in *Lois Lane* #60 (October 1965).

I would consider myself as a "Lori completest," but my particular collecting interest ("sirenapanelology") extends to current titles as well, whether the emphasis is on merfolk visually or contextually. Sadly, I find the current incarnation of Ms. Lemaris in the Superman continuity to be one of wasted potential, when contrasted with the relative prominence of supporting merfolk characters in DC's Silver Age titles. But given that Superman (and his kin) in those times had become virtually omnipotent, it seemed natural that there would be an affinity between fantastic super-beings of modern mythology and the fantastic creatures of ancient myths.

By Will Murray



The Roots of the SUPERMAN!

Superman. The first superhero. When he debuted in 1938, the Man of Steel represented such a quantum leap forward in heroes that every imitative character who came after him *had* to be called a superhero.

Right?

Wrong!

The word superhero predates Superman by several years. And I can prove it.

First, let's look at the history of the word. If you go back to the Golden Age of comics, you can hardly find it in four-color print. In fact, the earliest reference I've located appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1941. Commenting on the first wave of comics collecting mania in the *Atlantic's* Contributor's Club column, Lovell Thomas, said this:

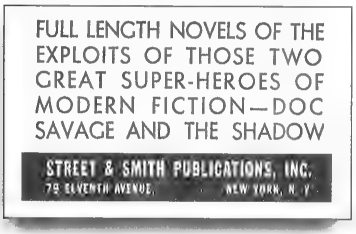
"There's a new straw in the wind. It is America's million- dollar-a-month craze for comic-strip magazines. This enormous business has grown up in less than two years—in the two years since Munich. The magazines are not just reprints of the comic pages: in fact, for the most part they feature different characters and a different formula. They run to serious supernatural-scientific episodes—a sort of Jules Verne-Tarzan combination. It is true that Superman and Flash Gordon of the newspapers belong to this type, and that they in turn were fathered by that old-fashioned hero of tomorrow, Buck Rogers—passed by before he was caught up to, a has-been before he was an is. However, the superhero is rare in the newspapers, whereas he is almost half the population of the magazines."

That last sentence may be the first actual use of the now-common term, superhero. *Post*-Superman, that is.

In comic books, you have to dig really deep to find it at all. The truth is, the term did not catch on until the Silver Age of Comics, when everyone started using it. I've by no means made an exhaustive search, but the only Golden Age comics references I know about are passing ones. The first Simon and Kirby Guardian story in *Star-Spangled Comics* #7 (April 1942) applies the word to the Guardian. On the cover of the debut *Supersnipe Comics*, dated October, 1942, Koppy McFadd is shown reading a copy of *Super-Hero Comics*. There may be other references in other comics, but these are the earliest I find. As you will see, it may be significant that the last one appears in a Street & Smith comic book.

Street & Smith was the greatest hero factory in the days before comic books. In its dime novel phase, it gave the world Nick Carter, Frank Merriwell, and Buffalo Bill. When the pulps came in, they continued to manufacture unforgettable heroes like The Shadow, Bill Barnes, and Doc Savage.

The debt Superman owes to Doc Savage is well-documented. Both were christened Clark. While one was the Man of Bronze, the other was the Man of Steel. They shared a high moral code, an abhorrence of killing and a personal belief that they could never marry, lest enemies strike at their loved ones. Both had younger female cousins who shared in their altruistic adven-


FULL LENGTH NOVELS OF THE EXPLOITS OF THOSE TWO GREAT SUPER-HEROES OF MODERN FICTION—DOC SAVAGE AND THE SHADOW
STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC.
79 ELEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

tures. Both retreated to their Fortress of Solitude in the North Pole on occasion. Both sported distinctive spitcurls.

Superman's creators have pegged 1933 or 1934—recollections vary—as the year they first conceptualized the Man of Steel.

"A Genius in intellect—

"A Hercules in strength—

"A nemesis to wrong-doers—

"The Superman!"

Thus proclaimed one of their earliest conceptual sketches, showing an uncostumed Superman looking rather like the early Doc Savage in his undershirt.

By no coincidence, 1934 S&S house ads touted Doc Savage with this banner: "Superman. Doc Savage—Man of Master Mind and Body."

Elsewhere that year, another house ad referred to the exploits of Doc and his Comrades as:

"The Two-Fisted Adventures of Super Men."

Of course, the word superman was first popularized in George Bernard Shaw's 1905 play, Man and Superman. So it had been around a while. For that matter, the prefix "super" had been bandied about S&S offices at least as far back as 1930, when their new title *Excitement* was described as the magazine of "super action" stories. The September, 1930 *Writer's Digest* quoted editor Lawrence Lee as saying: "*Excitement* wishes super-action manuscripts with a thrill from first sentence to the last."

They really liked to throw that modifier "super" around at S&S. According to the *Dictionary of American Slang*, the slang term super came into use circa 1935 as a synonym for something really wonderful. Super-duper was a later variant. What did it mean exactly? Opinions vary. It's short for superlative. Or maybe superior. It's hard to imagine Superman as short for Superlative Man. But Superior Man rings true. The coining is derived from Friedrich Nietzsche's 1883 concept of the *Übermensch*. Literally, the Overman, the evolutionary superman yet to come, whom the German philosopher saw as beyond good and evil.

When Jerry Siegel once described Superman as "a character like Sampson, Hercules and all the strong men I ever heard tell of rolled into one," he left out one important name: Doc Savage. And unconsciously, he was echoing Doc Savage creator Lester Dent, who once made a strikingly similar comment:

"I looked at what people had gone for already, so I took Sherlock Holmes with his deductive ability, Tarzan of the Apes with his towering physique, Craig Kennedy with his scientific knowledge, and Abraham Lincoln with his Christliness. Then I rolled 'em all into one to get—Doc Savage."

Doc Savage was frequently called a "superman" in the earliest issues and S&S house ads. A number of times, Dent described Doc in terms that foreshadow typical superhero description:

"This man of mystery has been trained from the cradle, until now he is almost a super being," wrote Dent in a 1933 tale. Furthermore, Doc "...seemed to possess abilities beyond those of ordinary mortals," according to a novel published just months before Superman's debut. Dent also employed descriptives much like those on that early Superman sketch. Doc was a metallic Nemesis, a bronze Hercules, a scientific genius, etc. In fact, the very name Doc Savage was emblematic of the bronze man's duel supernature. "Doc" stood for his scientific prowess, and the surname "Savage" denoted his powerful Tarzanlike physique. For that matter, his given name of Clark also symbolized the intellectual side of this duality, and was the perfect name for a mild-mannered reporter.

Nowhere in the 182 original novels was Doc Savage explicitly called a superhero. But elsewhere, he was. Often. And his crime-fighting compatriot, The Shadow was similarly styled as well.

When Doc Savage first appeared on radio, a Street & Smith promotional brochure boasted: "That superhero, Doc Savage, comes to West Coast radio listeners each Sunday night at 9 P.M. over the Don Lee California network, sponsored by Cystex, the Knox Company product."

The brochure dates to January or February, 1934. If there is an earlier appearance of the word superhero anywhere, I have never discovered it. But this unusual terminology was no one-time fluke.

At the end of 1935, Street & Smith began reprinting Doc Savage and Shadow novels in hardcover. A house ad in the August 1935 issue of *Bill Barnes* captioned a picture of the Man of Bronze thusly:

"Doc Savage. Amazing Adventurer, Super-Hero."

A similar ad in the December 15, 1935 *Shadow* said:

FULL LENGTH NOVELS OF THE EXPLOITS OF THOSE TWO GREAT SUPER-HEROES OF MODERN FICTION—DOC SAVAGE AND THE SHADOW

Around this time, Walter Gibson in his Shadow novels began to apply the prefix "super" to a whole raft of villains.

In the 1932 novel, *Dead Men Live*, Gibson introduces the concept of "supercrime"—crimes so powerful they can only be committed by what he

calls "supercrooks." Suddenly, The Shadow was battling a raft of "super-criminals," "supervillains," "superspies," "supergangsters," "supermen of crime" and "supergenius of crime." Once in a while, Gibson employed the term "supervillain." He may have actually coined this now-familiar word. Gibson had more trouble labeling The Shadow himself. At first, groping for a generic term to describe The Shadow, Gibson dubbed him an "avenger." By 1933, he was repeatedly referring to the Master of Darkness as a "supersleuth" or "superbeing." The Shadow was also called a superman a time or two, but in the generic sense of the word.

It's therefore no coincidence that Jerry Siegel has stated in print that he was a reader of *The Shadow*. I don't know if he ever admitted to reading *Doc Savage*, but it's a reasonable assumption since Doc was the more science fictional of the two titles. Jerry was a voracious SF fan.

To Walter Gibson, it seems, goes the credit for creating the essential superhero vs. supervillain dynamic, as typified by this 1933 line: "Supercrooks had met defeat when they encountered a superfighter known as The Shadow."

But Doc Savage and The Shadow weren't the only Street & Smith pulp heroes dubbed "super."

When Street & Smith contracted writer Charles Spain Verral to write the Bill Barnes air novels in December, 1933, S&S executive Henry Ralston cautioned Verral that:

"We ought not to forget that the more we can develop the idea that Bill Barnes can do anything in the air, that he is really a super-man, a bird without wings, the more attractive the magazine will be to its readers."

Bill Barnes was no caped avenger, but the greatest pilot between the world wars, builder of the legendary Stormer and Lancer superplanes. After three years of fantastic aerial exploits, the editors decided to whittle Bill down to more human dimensions. Verral shot back this stiff objection:

"These stories are based on a superhero. Bill's history and background is an extravagant one. He is the greatest ace in the world. That has been drummed into the readers since the start. I was instructed to do this. Bill has made colossal flights and done great things. He has a super airport. He has a super flying force. He has super planes. His Lancer is faster than anything that had been invented or will be for some time.

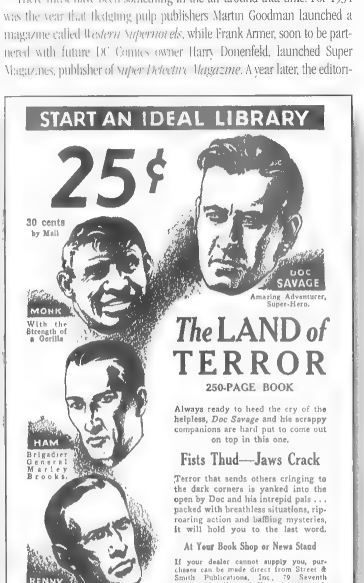
"Now, with all this in mind, all this super-hero stuff—do you think it's humanly possible to get utterly mature stories? A superhero, surrounded by the finest equipment any man has ever had, cannot deal with mediocre villains. Ye gods, that's the thing I have long objected to. When we were considering building the Lancer I fought against adding to the speed that the old Stormer had attained. In trying to rub off some of the super polish I have tried to bring personal problems into Bill's life. I have made him broke and fighting for his very existence even as you and I. I have tried to bring him down to earth and plant his feet on the ground and make a normal guy out of him. But even so, with the background, Bill can never be changed. His very existence is based upon tremendous skill, and wealth and exaggeration."

Verral, in the course of writing this resignation letter, went on to add: "*Air Trails* will never become of *Cosmopolitan* of the air while the B.B. series is still running. Its roots are too firmly planted in the super fiction field."

The date of this letter? July 31, 1937—a solid year before *Action* #1.

Now I'm not an etymologist, but I think I can make a case that the word "superhero" was first coined in the Street & Smith editorial offices sometime circa 1934 to apply to their line of larger-than-life pulp heroes—those same characters who inspired Superman, Batman and—directly or indirectly—virtually every superhero who followed.

There must have been something in the air around that time. For 1934 was the year that fledgling pulp publishers Martin Goodman launched a magazine called *Western Supernovels*, while Frank Armer, soon to be partnered with future DC Comics owner Harry Donenfeld, launched Super Magazines, publisher of *Super Detective Magazine*. A year later, the editor-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SALES TAX:

al to *New Comics* #1 skates dangerously close to rezoning the term when it speaks rather prophetically of those "...hero supermen of the days to come." (See "DC Before Superman" in the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* #13, 1983, Page A-82)

Whatever was in the air, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster caught it. And a good thing too.

But there is another important and influential strongman Siegel forgot to mention when he cited his many influences. That was Hugo Danner, the superhuman protagonist of Philip Wylie's 1930 bestseller, *Gladiator*. If there was a raw blueprint for Superman, it was that book. The limited powers of the 1938 Superman were identical to those of Danner's—impossible strength and invulnerability to bullets but not shells and shrapnel, along with the ability to leap the incredible distances the pre-flying Superman specialized in. Some of the explanations for Superman's early phenomenal powers are literally lifted from Wylie's seminal superman novel, which had been written as far back as 1927 but held up until Wylie had created a reputation that wouldn't be hurt by so preposterous a concept.

(Continued on page 68)

Buying The Edgar Church Collection!

Part III

Thank you for your responses! The reaction to my first *"Buying The Edgar Church Collection"* ads has been tremendous. Diamond International Galleries has received phone calls, faxes and letters from all around fandom. I've just got one thing to say: Don't stop! The level of interest, even from those hobbyists and dealers hesitant to sell collectibles of such a high caliber, has been very high.

The Edgar Church Collection has been considered the granddaddy of all comic book finds since it was first announced. Many collectors have held individual issues or complete runs of these *Mile High* books as the prizes of their collections, and rightly so. When I kicked off this campaign in **Comic Book Marketplace** #61, it was with a special respect for my fellow collectors who hold these rare, cherished mementos of American pop culture.

My goal is to reunite this awesome collection, but I know that these kinds of comics aren't easy to part with. If you don't find it desirable to offer your Mile High copies at present, sometimes circumstances change and you could find it advantageous to sell them later. I hope you'll be interested in selling them now, but I'll be interested later, too. That's why this is an on-going project. These beautiful treasures belong together, and I would like to be the one to bring about their reunification.

Whether you have a single issue or complete runs in original, unrestored condition, I'm interested and I'm prepared to pay you at least 2x Guide in instant cash, regardless of publisher. While I'm particularly looking for NM to NM+ Golden Age titles at this time, I would be glad to consider any other books from this collection.

If you have Mile High copies to sell or you know of someone who does, we're always easy to contact! Call John K. Snyder on our Toll Free line, **(888) 355-9800** ext. 271 or fax (410) 560-7143.

Steve Geppi
Chief Executive Officer

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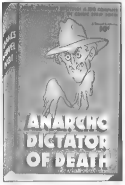

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$52,000

Headline Comics #8
$660

Jumbo Comics #8
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Mask Comics #1
$5,400

Master Comics #8
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Miracle Comics #1
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More Fun #39
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More Fun #101
$21,000

Pep Comics #20
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$5,700

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$2,700

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$1,920

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$9,600

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$6,300

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Wonder Comics #1
$2,400

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$4,500

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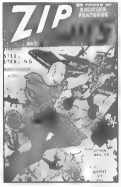

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'TWIXT JOE AND CURT

THE ART OF WAYNE BORING AND STAN KAYE

By Lynn Woolley

Superman is 60 now, and at least that many artists have had a chance to be a part of the legend of the Man of Steel. And though the memories of many fans are fading, no artist other than Joe Shuster himself has been more important in Superman's history than the great Wayne Boring. Boring is to Superman what Dick Sprang is to Batman: the first artist to pick up the reins from the creators and redefine the character for generations to come.

Wayne Boring

To any child of the late forties or early fifties, growing up with Superman meant growing up with Wayne Boring's art. Once Shuster and some of the other early artists such as Fred Ray and Jack Burnley left the strip, Boring (along with Al Plastino who worked hard to imitate the Boring style) was the workhorse. By the late forties, the early crudely-drawn Superman had evolved into the hero we all recognize today—with Wayne Boring at the drawing board. Boring's Superman was mature, perhaps a man in his late thirties or early forties. His Superman was raw power—barrel-chested and heroic. His backgrounds were lush. each panel crammed with detail.

As Jim Steranko put it in the *Steranko History of Comics* (Vol 1 1970): "...the work of Wayne Boring emerges as the most notable of the 'stable' artists. Boring salvaged the Man of Steel by transforming him into a massive, muscled version of virile exuberance. His expressive faces, and tight, incisive rendering breathed new life into Superman's tired hulk. Cities became skyscrapered stylizations of vertical lines. Superman began to look the part. Boring's classic figure remains as the model for today's Superman."

And, indeed, Boring gave us the classic images that came to be such a part of the legend: the flying scenes with one leg bent; Clark Kent in a darkened alley with glasses still on, pulling his shirt open to reveal the Superman shield; the futuristic skyline of Kryptonopolis.

Not much has been written about Wayne Boring, so research is difficult. But it is known that Boring was there almost from the start. As in the case of Batman and Bob Kane, demand for Superman artwork rapidly outstripped Joe Schuster's ability to keep up the pace. And so, the two young men from Cleveland who had recently been rejected so many times, were forced to place an ad in *Writer's Digest* to look for an art assistant. Jerry Siegel placed the ad, and the two waited to see what kind of response they'd get.

According to an account in *Amazing Heroes* #41 (1984), Boring told interviewer Richard Pachter that he carried the magazine in his back pocket for a couple of weeks before responding. But he finally did contact Joe and Jerry. Jerry liked his samples, so Wayne took a leave of absence from the Virginia Pilot newspaper where he worked in Norfolk, Virginia, and headed to New York. Jerry met him at Grand Central Station and took him to see Joe.

Boring was already trained as an artist, having attended the Minneapolis Institute of Art after he'd gotten out of high school, and he'd studied anatomy at the Chicago Art Institute. Jerry and Joe were impressed enough with what they saw that they asked Wayne to go back to Cleveland with them to work on the Man of Steel.

Back in Cleveland, they joined with other artists like Paul Cassidy, Leo Nowack, and John Sikela to churn out Superman's adventures. Siegel still wrote most of the stories, and soon Wayne was handed the job of working on the newly sold Superman newspaper strip. Superman, who had started as a sample newspaper strip, had come full circle.

As Joe Schuster's eyesight began to fail, Boring became more and more important. He not only penciled, inked, and lettered the newspaper strip, he was also turning out stories for the comics, and contributing dozens of covers to *Action Comics* and *Superman*. At first, Wayne said DC didn't even know that he was working on the character, but they soon found out, and took him off other strips (such as Slam Bradley) and had him dedicate all his time to Superman.

Sometime in 1940, team Superman moved back to New York at the urging of DC. Wayne, and his wife (Lois!) made the trip too. Later, when Siegel and Schuster sued DC over rights to the character, Boring was named in the lawsuit and taken off Superman. So he made his money doing advertising art. Before long, DC hired Wayne directly, and he was back on Superman. During

THAT ROCKET SHIP'S ABOUT TO CRASH! I'D BETTER SWITCH FROM CLARK KENT TO SUPERMAN!
AND I'LL CHANGE FROM CRAIG KING TO THE SUPERMAN OF 2956, AND JOIN YOU!

this period, Wayne was inking his own pencils most of the time, but soon the demand for his artwork forced him to work with a regular inker. (More on that later.)

Wayne's star continued to shine brightly at DC. He worked on Siegel scripts (after Jerry's return), along with those from other writers such as Otto Binder, Edmond Hamilton, Leo Dorfman, and even Batman scribe Bill Finger. All went well until he got on the wrong side of—you guessed it—Mort Weisinger! According to the 1984 piece in *Amazing Heroes*, one day in 1966, without warning, Mort fired Wayne. It came as a shock after almost thirty years, but Weisinger was convinced that the simpler, more youthful style of Curt Swan was the wave of the future.

Boring was fired by Weisinger—that fact is not in dispute—but there are a couple of indications that it might have been later, perhaps in 1967. One indication is that Boring's work continued to appear in the comics well past 1966, although some of that work could have been in DC's inventory. It's hard to imagine that the cover and story for the August 1967 issue of *Action* would have been done six months (or more) in advance.

The second significant point comes out in a letter from the "Metropolis Mailbag" in *Superman* #191 dated November 1966: "Dear Editor: I certainly enjoyed 'The Secret of Krypton's Second Doom…' [*Superman* #189–Aug '66–an issue that marked one of Boring's several 'returns' to the comics.] This was the best story you've had all year, even eclipsing 'The Two Ghosts of Superman.' The artwork was similar to that which appeared in your magazines years ago. I like it but can't find the name of the artist. —Douglas Sandee

Editor Weisinger replied: "The art on 'Krypton's Second Doom' was the work of Wayne Boring… Superman illustrator from the 'Golden Age' of comics. Until recently, Wayne was busy with the Superman newspaper strip, but now he's back with the mags—and your letter is typical of the many hundreds we received welcoming his return. —Ed."

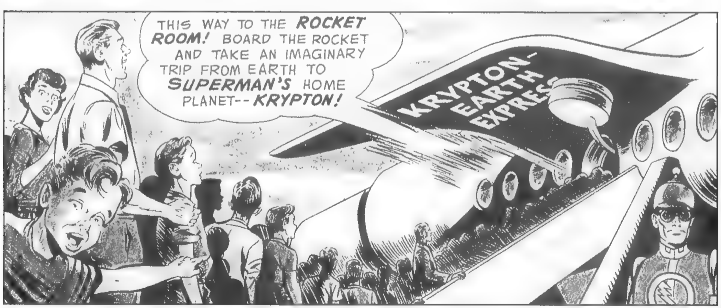
Well, if hundreds of letters supported Boring's return, then why would Weisinger want to fire him? And why would he print such a letter so late in the year (November cover-dated books come out around September)? Perhaps the changing tastes of comic book readers had some influence on Weisinger's decision to oust Boring. As Gerard Jones and Will Jacobs put it in *The Comic Book Heroes* (revised edition, 1997):

"Wayne Boring's art was like no one else's, blending operatic grandeur, golden-age goofiness, and an almost dreamlike oddity. He gave power to Superman's new emotionality, but he couldn't keep up with the new intimacy."

Jones and Jacobs may have been referring to Weisinger's

A closeup of Boring's striking splash panel from Superman #60 (Sep/Oct 1949) shows the artist's expert use of heavy blacks in the background.

The wait to take an imaginary trip from Earth to Krypton in Superman Land is worse than the lines on a crowed day in Disneyland!


THIS WAY TO THE ROCKET ROOM! BOARD THE ROCKET AND TAKE AN IMAGINARY TRIP FROM EARTH TO SUPERMAN'S HOME PLANET--KRYPTON!
KRYPTON-EARTH EXPRESS

decision to put Superman in more "situation" stories rather than in stories involving crime or super villains. These new emotional stories featured no villains at all, but rather had Superman returning to Krypton to fall in love with a beautiful Kryptonian woman—or, meeting up with another beautiful girl who turned out to be a mermaid—or, reliving his college days and how he outwitted a wily professor who was on to his secret identity—or, various Weisinger "imaginary" stories about "what-ifs" in Superman's life. This was a natural evolution for a god-like hero who had no real peers among his adversaries. Besides, these new stories appealed to girls as well as boys—but they may have been better suited to Swan or Schaffenberger.

After the firing, Boring tooled around the industry, ghosting on several newspaper strips such as Prince Valiant and Rip Kirby. For a short while in the early seventies Wayne worked under Stan Lee on Marvel's version of Captain Marvel.

Regardless of his status with Weisinger, the great Superman stories of this period were invariably drawn by Wayne Boring. "The Girl in Superman's Past" (in which he first met Lori Lemaris) from *Superman* #129 (1959) and "The Super Key to Fort Superman" from *Action* #241 (1958) both look like they could be "pure" Boring on both pencils and inks. "Superman's Other Life" from *Superman* #132 (1959) is definitely Boring with Kaye inks.

If you still doubt Boring's talent, grab a copy of the special treasury-sized *Amazing World of Superman* that DC published in 1973. The editors took a story called "Superman in Superman Land" from *Action* #210 (Nov 1955), removed the color, and added a "wash" tint, then printed the story in oversized format. The splash is incredible, with Superman soaring over an amusement park peopled with adoring fans and sporting three-dimensional buildings and lettering. It's not certain who inked the story, but a reprint of the splash in "The Superman Gallery" from 1993 credits the art to Boring alone. If you're curious about Steranko's comment regarding the stylized Metropolis skyline—take a gander at the top right panel on page two of this story. Beautiful, and classic Wayne Boring.

In 1984, at the age of 66, the great Wayne Boring had retired from comics and was working as a part time security guard. He commented that he'd been painting a lot, and might even like to draw a Superman story now and then. He did—just once more—before he passed away.

Amazing Heroes #41 (Feb 1984) boasts an amazing Wayne Boring cover that was most likely his last. It was one of the few times he was given the opportunity to sign his work.

Stan Kaye

When it became necessary for Wayne Boring to take on a permanent inker, it was fortunate indeed that Stan Kaye was available. Kaye, perhaps the finest inker of that period that connected the Golden Age to the Silver Age, became to Boring what Charles Paris was to Dick Sprang: the man who kept the lines clean and brought out the genius in the original pencils. As good as Boring's art already was, it reached new and tremendous heights with the pen and brush embellishment of Stan Kaye.

One of the all-time classic panels from the 1950s...

Stan Kaye may have the distinction of being the comic book artist with the most last names. He was born Stanley Rivinas on November 24, 1916 in Brooklyn. He became Stanley Kalinowski after his father died and his mother remarried. Later, he went to work for a man named William MacKay who didn't like writing out such a long name on a paycheck—so he began to use the name "Stan Kaye." Stan got used to the shorter version, and after he was married in 1945, he made it official legally.

MacKay had been a muralist, and in the 1930s, Kaye went to work for another person in that field—Dean Cornwell. Copying Cornwell's left-handed style forced Stan to work left-handed too. Another way Cornwell would influence the young Stan Kaye was to introduce him to illustrator Harvey Dunn. Stan attended Dunn's classes at the Grand Central School of Art along with other future DC staffers, including Charles Paris. By 1941, Kaye had landed a job at DC.

One of Kaye's artistic loves was cartooning. He particularly enjoyed the work of Roy Crane, and adopted that style for the "Genius Jones" feature appearing in *More Fun* and *Adventure Comics*. During this period, he was doing cartoon-style work, text illustrations, and even some superhero work for DC along with some free lance magazine illustrations.

Over 21 years in the business, he worked on most of DC's main characters, eventually becoming Wayne Boring's top inker. In the late forties he relieved Boring of the inking chores on the Superman newspaper strip. In 1946 he inked (over Dick Sprang's pencils) an episode of the Batman daily strip. Kaye became the most frequent inker of all the Superman family of books in the mid forties, inking almost all of Boring's covers, and continuing the inking chores when Curt Swan took over as the top cover pen-

Continued on page 66

L'ÉVADÉ
DE KRYP

FRENCHMAN OF STEEL

The Early History of Superman in France

By Eric Vigno[illegible]

(Translated by Tristan Lapoussière)

FRANCE CIRCA 1940

Right from his very beginning in France (between 1939 and 1941), Superman was successively published by two different companies, a situation brought about by circumstances of no small importance, German occupation. In contrast to the United States (where the comic book format rapidly became the norm), two types of formats were available to French comics readers. The first was the "périodiques," or periodicals, which were weekly newspaper-size comics featuring ongoing, "to-be-continued" episodic-style series. The second was "récits complets," French for "complete stories," each of which presented (as the name implies) a self-contained story. Amazingly, Superman made his French debut in both of these formats.

S.A.G.E. "périodiques"

In late 1938, the McClure Newspaper Syndicate bought the syndication rights to the upcoming *Superman* comic strip and assumed its distribution, the first strip appearing on January 16, 1939 in *The Houston Chronicle*. At exactly the same time, the strip was represented in France by a press agency, l'Agence Française de Presse (A.F.P.), which licensed it to Parisian publisher S.A.G.E. (Société Anonyme Générale d'Editions). The strip was slated to appear in S.A.G.E.'s *Aventures* (no relation with DC's *Adventure Comics*) and its upcoming publication was announced through four "tops" strips beginning with January 7, 1939 (before the strip even began to appear in the USA!). Superman made his debut in issue #10 of *Aventures*, dated March 7, 1939. His name was arbitrarily changed to Yordi, apparently derived from a Spanish name. Jor-El and Lara became, respectively, Aldebaran and Liama.

During the course of his first adventures, Yordi (Superman) met George Taylor (*The Daily Star*'s first editor in chief), ex-boxer Harry Trent, young Jimmy Olsen, and his first arch-villain, Ultra Humanite (who is *(Continued on page 34)*

TWO ULTRA-SCARCE PIECES OF SUPERMAN MEMORABILIA... on the left is the very first Siegel & Schuster Superman/Yordi strip published in France. It graced the pages of *Aventures* #10 (March 7, 1939). On the right is an extremely rare advertising page from the Idaho Daily **Statesman** (Aug 26, 1940) promoting its new feature—Superman! Note that the full-page ad has been created by "cutting & pasting" panels from various daily pages to assemble a 36-panel Superman "origin" story.

YORDI
LA-BAS, DANS LES DERNIÈRES PROFONDEURS DU CIEL, IL Y A UNE PLANÈTE, CRYPTON SES HABITANTS SONT ARRIVÉS AU DERNIER STADE DE L'ÉVOLUTION CE SONT DES SURHOMMES, LEURS FACULTÉS TANT PHYSIQUES QUE SPIRITUELLES SONT DÉVELOPPÉES À UN DEGRÉ DONT NOUS AUTRES HUMAINS AVONS PEINE À NOUS FAIRE UNE IDÉE
VOICI UN DE CES SURHOMMES : ALDEBARAN À LA COURSE IL RATTRAPERAIT NOS TRAINS LES PLUS RAPIDES
LA MAISON D'ALDEBARAN, HAUTE DE PLUSIEURS CENTAINES DE MÈTRES, N'A M'ESCALIER NI AS D'ASCENSEUR IL LUI SUFFIT D'UN BOND POUR ÊTRE AU FAITE
J'AI FAIT AUSSI VITE QUE POSSIBLE MA CHÈRE LIAMA? COMMENT VA NOTRE CHER PETIT ?
ALDEBARAN ENFIN ! TE VOILÀ !
NOTRE FILS EST UN ENFANT TERRIBLE IL A FALLU ÉBORGNER LE DOCTEUR QUI L'EXAMINAIT ET J'AI EU BIEN DE LA PEINE À LE RETENIR
MA PETITE CARAMENTHE TU AURAS DE LA VEINE TENIR AU
PLUS QUE JE N'AURAIS OSÉ LE SOUHAITER !
ES-TU HEUREUX ALDEBARAN ?
SOUDAIN, LE PLANCHER SE MET À OSCILLER LENTEMENT D'ABORD
QU'EST CE, ALDEBARAN ?
UN TREMBLEMENT DE TERRE !
...PUIS CE SONT DES SECOUSSES D'UNE VIOLENCE CROISSANTE.
ÉBRANLÉE JUSQUE DANS SES FONDATIONS, LA MAISON SOLIDE POURTANT, MENACE DE S'ÉCROULER
CRAC
LIAMA ... MON PETIT ENFANT ! IL FAUT QUE JE LES SAUVE !
LIAMA ! TU N'ES PAS BLESSÉE, N'EST CE PAS LE PETIT ?
NON, ÇA VA BIEN MAIS POURQUOI LES TREMBLEMENTS DE TERRE SONT-ILS DEVENUS SI FRÉQUENTS ?
ALDEBARAN CONDUIT SA FEMME ET SON ENFANT DANS SON OBSERVATOIRE BLINDÉ
TU ME ME REPONDS PAS QUE DIGNERA-T-IL A M'EXPLIQUER CETTE SÉRIE DE TREMBLEMENTS ?
C'EST CE QUE JE VAIS CHERCHER À SAVOIR
ARRIVÉ À DESTINATION, ALDÉBARAN S'ENFERME DANS SON LABORATOIRE ET SE PLONGE DANS DE SAVANTS CALCULS !
DES HEURES PASSENT, PUIS DES JOURS
MANGE UN PEU ALDEBARAN...
JE T'AI DIT QUE JE NE VOULAIS PAS QU'ON ME DÉRANGE
APRÈS CINQ JOURS DE RECHERCHES, ALDEBARAN COMPREND LA TERRIBLE RÉALITÉ
NON ! JE ME SUIS TROMPÉ ! C'EST IMPOSSIBLE !
JURE À DIEU QUE C'EST UNE ERREUR ! MAIS NON, J'AI CENT FOIS REFAIT MES CALCULS AVEC LE MÊME RÉSULTAT
ALDEBARAN ... IL FAUT QUE JE TE PARLE !
COMME TU ES PÂLE ! MON CHER, IL SE PASSE QUELQUE CHOSE ! DIS-MOI TOUT !
JE T'EN SUPPLIE !
NON, JE NE PUIS !
SOIT ! TOI DU MOINS, TU DEVRAS LE SAVOIR ! LA PLANÈTE EST CONDAMNÉE ! DANS QUELQUES JOURS, CRYPTON VA MOURIR AVEC TOUS SES HABITANTS
QUOI ? NOTRE PLANÈTE VA MOURIR ?
SANS AUCUN DOUTE ! CES TREMBLEMENTS DE TERRE SONT UN AVERTISSEMENT ! UNE GIGANTESQUE EXPLOSION SE PRÉPARE ET LA PLANÈTE VA ÉCLATER ! SES FRAGMENTS SE DISPERSERONT DANS L'UNIVERS
A SUIVRE

Now! Every Day in THE STATESMAN

SUPERMAN

SUPERMAN is the hero of today's number one adventure strip. The picture story at the right tells where SUPERMAN was born, and how he came to earth.

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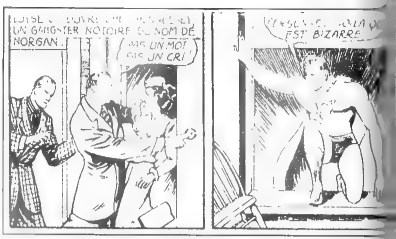
TURN TO CLASSIFIED NOW FOR THE NEXT SUPERMAN

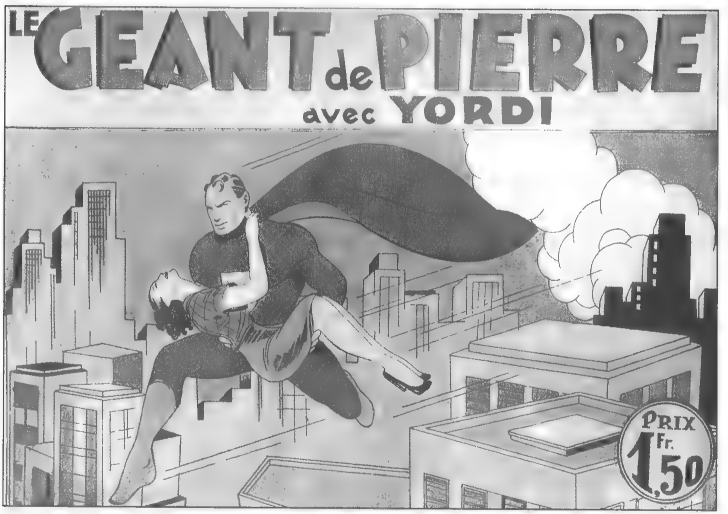
FRENCHMAN OF STEEL!

Continued from page 31

strongly reminiscent of Siegel and Shuster's "prehistoric" Superman of 1933). The Frenchman Of Steel also fought the death penalty, the New York Mafia, a corrupt building contractor, war in Boravia, child abuse, political pressures, and the commercial use made of his name.

Incredibly, in spite of an increasingly stringent German censorship, the publication of American strips persisted up until issue #38 of *Aventures*, dated September 27, 1940. At that time, the rights to Superman were sold to another company, A. Besnard's S.E.P.I. (Société d'Editions et de Périodiques Illustrés).

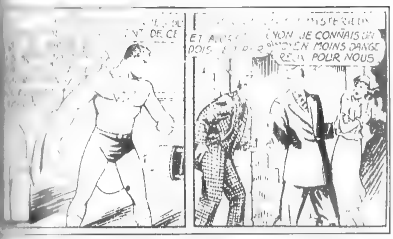




S.E.P.I. "périodiques"

At S.E.P.I., Superman was renamed François l'Imbattable (Francis the Unbeatable) and his costume was modified into a pair of shorts and a skin-tight pull-over. François l'Imbattable first appeared in *Hurrah!* #266 (December 24, 1940). After eight strips, the character was taken over by French artist René Brantonne who drew original stories through *Hurrah!* #282 (April 16, 1941). These episodes would shortly be reprinted the same year in the Free Zone edition of *Hurrah!* and in another periodical, *Tarzan*.

On March 24, 1940, another superhero had made his first appearance in *Hurrah!*... The Blue Beetle, known in France as "Le Fantôme d'Acier" (The Steel Phantom). The name was inspired by Lee Falk & Ray Moore's famous Phantom strip). Publication of the Blue Beetle started with the Jack Kirby



strips, but by a series of quirky events (which would require an article in itself), Superman and the Blue Beetle fused together and became one! That bizarre anomoly in French publishing history occurred in *Hurrah!* #283 (April 23, 1941). Superman continued in the guise of the Blue Beetle until *Hurrah!* #311 (November 5, 1941), where he was returned to his old self again (plus published in color for the first time). Le Fantôme d'Acier (Superman) was to cease publi-

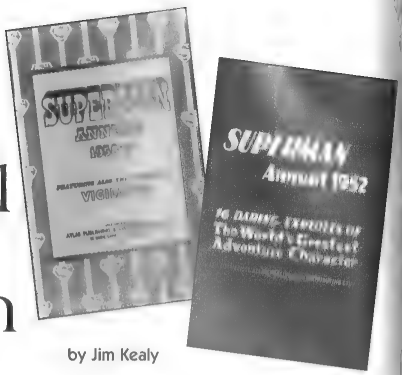
CEPENDANT L'EAU MONTE TOUJOURS
ELLE ATTEINT LE MENTON DE LOYSE
MON... C'EST LUI ! MERCI, MON DIEU !
LE SURHOMME BRISE AISÉMENT LES
CHAINES QUI RETENAIENT LOYSE
VITE SORTEZ DOUCEMENT
DE LA !

cation during the German occupation, but later, Superman would resume his adventures in *Hurrah!* #326 (February 18, 1942).

S.A.G.E. "Récits Complets"

By late 1939, S.A.G.E. was having difficulty obtaining the US Superman stats (undoubtedly due to routing problems between America and France as a result of the War). Publication would resume two months later, but S.A.G.E., in an effort to continue the series in the interim, decided to use Italian "Superman" material as a substitute. It is a little known fact among Superman historians and collectors that Italy had developed its own Superman-type character very early on. The Italian "Superman" was suggestively named Ciclone. In addition to the weekly periodical *L'Audacia*, his adventures ran as a series *(Continued on page 68)*

Those Wonderful British Superman Annuals!



by Jim Kealy

The first Superman story I can remember reading was "Superman Returns to Krypton," way back in 1958. It wasn't the original U.S. comic, it was the first story in the *Superman Adventure Book* 1955-56, and was in glorious black and white.

This was the introduction, for me, to the wonderful world of the *Superman Annual* a colour cardboard covered book which generally contained 15 Superman stories. A couple of the earlier books, 1953-54 and 1954-55, had 16 stories and the '54-55 Annual also included two Batman stories from 1950.

The first of this series was issued just before Christmas 1951 under the title *The Superman Bumper Edition*. It contained a whopping 192 pages and included 12 Golden Age stories taken from the pages of *World's Finest*, *Action* and *Superman* (with illustrations mainly by the illustrious Wayne Boring). It also featured 16 funny cartoons plus 2 tales of Zatara the Magician. It was bound with a cotton spine as were the three which followed it.

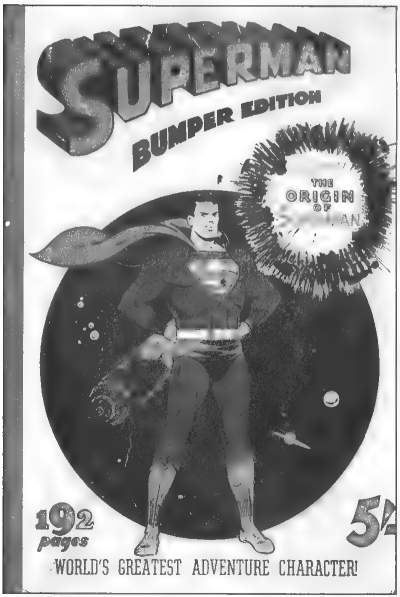
The first adventure book was published in 1954-55 and had a cardboard spine. This fact is important to collectors because finding the remaining books in the series with the spines intact can prove a difficult task. Also of note... that first adventure book contained four Murphy Anderson-illustrated Captain Comet stories reprinted from vintage *Strange Adventures*.

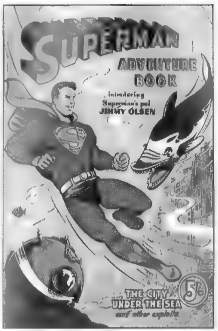
As the series continued other characters made guest appearances, including Jimmy Olsen in 1956-57, 1959-60, 1960-61 (all the stories illustrated by Curt Swan); Green Arrow in 1959-60, 1960-61 and 1961-62 (some illustrated by Jack Kirby); Lois Lane by Kurt Schaffenberger in 1959-60; and Vigilante by Dan Barry in 1958-59.

The covers were illustrated by British "in-house" artists, apart from those on the Bumper Edition and the 1952 book which were Wayne Boring's work. Interestingly, the cover on the 1952 Annual was actually an adapted Boring splash page.

So there you have it. A lovely set of books quite keenly sought after by collectors for their Golden Age and Silver Age content.

Happy 60th Birthday Superman. Here's to the next 60.

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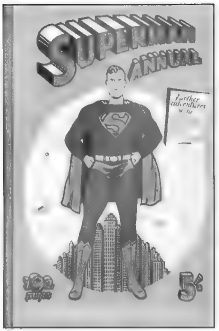
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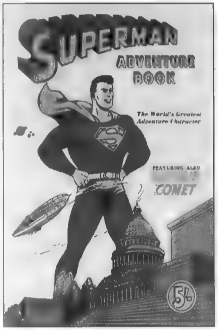
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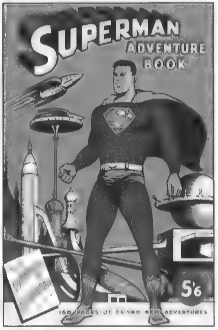
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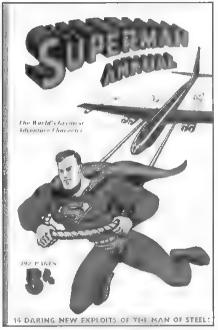
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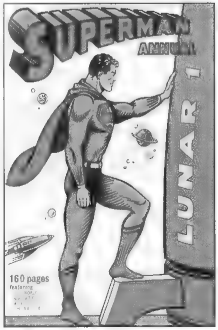
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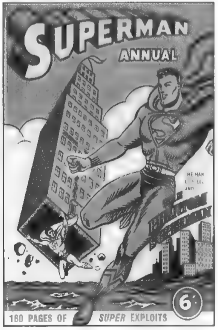
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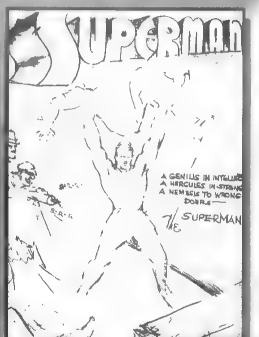
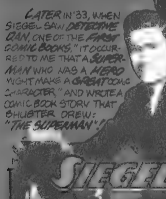


SUPERMAN WAS THE BRAINCHILD OF WRITER JERRY SIEGEL & ARTIST JOE SHUSTER.

"JOE AND I WERE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATES IN CLEVELAND," SIEGEL RECALLED. "LIKE ME, HE WAS A SCIENCE FICTION FAN; WE PUBLISHED A FANZINE CALLED *SCIENCE ACTION*, WITH JOE AS ART DIRECTOR AND *MYSELF* AS EDITOR." IN THE JANUARY 1933 ISSUE, SIEGEL'S "*THE REIGN OF THE SUPERMAN*" SAW PRINT. ONLY IN *THIS* TALE, THE "SUPERMAN" IS A *VILLAIN!*

LATER IN '33, WHEN SIEGEL SAW *DETECTIVE COMICS*, ONE OF THE *FIRST COMIC BOOKS*, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT A *SUPERMAN* WHO HAS A *HERO* MIGHT MAKE A *GREAT* COMIC CHARACTER," AND WROTE A COMIC BOOK STORY THAT SHUSTER DREW: "*THE SUPERMAN!*"



BUT AFTER IT WAS *RECOUNTED* IN *DETECTIVE COMICS*' PUBLISHER, SHUSTER, DEJECTED, *DESTROYED* ALL THE ORIGINAL ART - ONLY THE *COVER* SURVIVED! THE *ALTERNATE* COVER *POLISHED* BEARS SIMILARITIES TO PULP PUBLISHER *STREET & SMITH'S* AD, RUN DURING *DOC SAVAGE'S* LAUNCH IN '33!

"WE FELT WE HAD A *GREAT* CHARACTER," SIEGEL REMEMBERED, "AND WERE *DETERMINED* IT WOULD *BE PUBLISHED!*" THEY SET OUT TO *RECREATE* SUPERMAN AS A *COMIC STRIP!* ONE SUMMER NIGHT IN '34, SIEGEL CAME UP WITH ALMOST *ALL* OF THE SUPERMAN LEGEND AS WE KNOW IT, WROTE *PAGES* OF STRIPS *BY MORNING*, AND HAD *SHUSTER* DRAWING IT *ALL* THE NEXT DAY -- INCLUDING THE CREATION OF *CLARK KENT*, NAMED AFTER *CLARK GABLE!*

"I SUGGESTED TO *JOE* HE PUT AN *'S'* IN A TRIANGLE," SIEGEL SAID. *SHUSTER* ADDED THE *CAPE* TO HELP GIVE THE *EFFECT OF MOTION* TO SUPERMAN. TOGETHER, THEY CHOSE PRIMARY COLORS FOR HIS COSTUME BECAUSE THEY WERE, SHUSTER RECOUNTED, "THE *BRIGHTEST* COLORS WE COULD THINK OF."

SUPERMAN CLASSICS

Spring 1939

Sprigs 1940

Spring 1941 (#1)

Summer 1941 (#2)

Apr. 1942 (#47)

SUPERMAN

PRESENTED BY THE WORDS & PICTURES MUSEUM

WRITTEN & DESIGNED by

ARLEN SCHUMER

COLOR ART by SHERRI WOLFGANG

IN ORDER TO MEET THE FIRST ISSUE'S DEADLINE, SHUSTER CUT, PASTED AND RE-DREW SUPERMAN'S DAILY STRIPS INTO 13 COMIC-BOOK-SIZED PAGES--

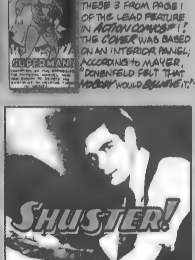
COMPARE THE 3 BLACK & WHITE *STRIP* PANELS TO THESE 3 FROM PAGE 1 OF THE LEAD FEATURE IN *ACTION COMICS* #1. THE *COVER* WAS BASED ON AN INTERIOR PANEL; ACCORDING TO MAYER, DONENFELD FELT THAT *NOBODY* WOULD *BELIEVE* IT."

SUPERMAN AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS, THEIR DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES THEREOF, AND ALL RELATED SYMBOLS AND INDICIA ARE TRADEMARKS & © DC COMICS INC.

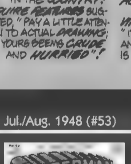
OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, THEIR *SUPERMAN* STRIP WAS "TURNED DOWN IN EVERY" COMIC SYNDICATE EDITOR IN THE COUNTRY." *EDGAR ALLAN WOOLF* SUGGESTED, "PAY A LITTLE ATTENTION TO ACTUAL *ARCHIVES*; YOURS SEEMS *CRUDE* AND *HURRIED*"."

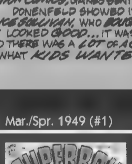
BUT *SHELDON MAYER*, AN EDITOR AT THE *McCLURE* SYNDICATE, "WENT *NUTS*." IT WAS THE THING WE WERE *ALL* LOOKING FOR!" HE COULDN'T CONVINCE HIS BOSS, *M.C. GAINES* TO PUBLISH IT, BUT WHEN *DC COMICS* PUBLISHER *HARRY DONENFELD* CALLED GAINES LOOKING FOR MATERIAL FOR HIS NEW TITLE, *ACTION COMICS*, GAINES SENT HIM *SUPERMAN*.

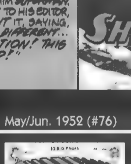
DONENFELD SHOWED IT TO HIS EDITOR, *VINCE SULLIVAN*, WHO *BOUGHT* IT, SAYING, "IT LOOKED *GOOD*... IT WAS *DIFFERENT*... AND THERE WAS A *LOT* OF *ACTION*." THIS IS WHAT *KIDS WANTED*!"



Jan. 1945 (#80) Jul./Aug. 1948 (#53) Mar./Spr. 1949 (#1) May/Jun. 1952 (#76) Oct. 1960 (#1)







SUPERMAN AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS, THEIR DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES THEREOF, AND ALL RELATED SYMBOLS AND INDICIA ARE TRADEMARKS of DC COMICS INC.

"FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET..."

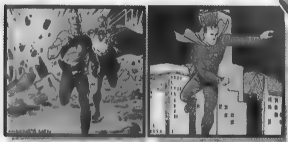
SUPERMAN #3, WINTER 1939

"MORE POWERFUL THAN A LOCOMOTIVE..."

JUNE '39

PANEL FROM SUPERMAN #1, SPRING 1939

SHUSTER REPRESENTED THE BEST IN OLD-STYLE COMIC BOOK DRAWING! HIS WORK WAS DIRECT, UNPRETTIFIED--CRUDE AND VIGOROUS; AS EASY TO READ AS A DIAGRAM!



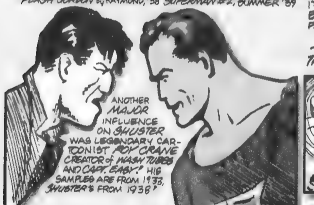
FLASH GORDON by RAYMOND, '38 SUPERMAN #2, SUMMER '39

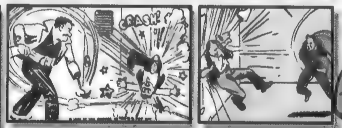
IN DRAWING STYLE, BOTH IN FIGURE AND COSTUME, SUPERMAN WAS A SIMPLIFIED PARODY OF FLASH GORDON! BUT IF ALEX RAYMOND WAS THE IDOR FOR SUPERMAN, JOE SHUSTER SET THE FASHION FROM THEN ON!

"HE COULD NOT DRAW WELL, BUT HE DREW SINGLE-MINDEDLY--NO ONE COULD GHOST THAT STYLE! IT WAS THE MAN! WHEN ASSISTANTS BEGAN 'IMPROVING' THE STRIP, IT PROMPTLY WENT DOWNHILL."

"BUT, OH, THOSE EARLY DRAWINGS!"

~EXCERPTED FROM JULES FEIFFER'S THE GREAT COMIC BOOK HEROES, DIAL PRESS, 1965


ANOTHER MAJOR INFLUENCE ON SHUSTER WAS LEGENDARY CARTOONIST CRAVE CREATOR of WASH TUBBS AND CAPT. EASY! HIS SAMPLES ARE FROM 1932, SHUSTER'S FROM 1938



DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS STILL FROM THE BLACK PIRATE, 1926.

STANCE: HANDS ON HIPS, FEET

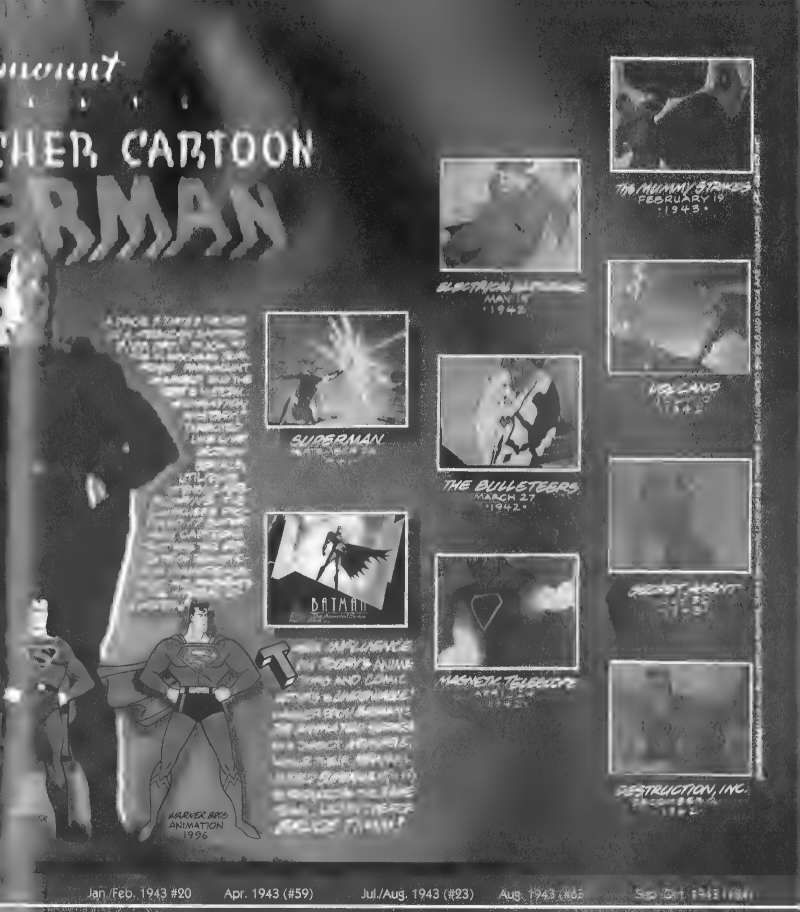
Dec. 1938 (#7) Mar. 1939 (#10) Summer 1939 (#1) Fall 1939 (#2) Oct. 1939 (#17)

SHUSTER

SHUSTER FIGURE SKETCHES FOR GEORGE CONTNER'S BOOK, THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, RANDOM HOUSE, 1942.
FROM THE BACK COVER OF SUPERMAN #1, BASED ON THE FINAL PANEL OF ACTION #1
ART BY A SHUSTER GHOST-ARTIST FROM THE SPLASH PAGE OF SUPERMAN #30, 1944.
ART by FRED RAY FROM THE COVER OF SUPERMAN #11, 1941.
AND BELOW: THE COVER OF IDOLS #1 (4), JAN/FEB '42: "TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE AMERICAN WAY!"
THE ASSISTANTS FEIFER REFERS TO ARE THE ARTISTS SHUSTER HIRED TO HELP MEET THE OVERWHELMING DEMAND FOR SUPERMAN MATERIAL (TWO COMIC BOOKS, DAILY & SUNDAY NEWSPAPER STRIPS, ENDLESS PROMOTIONAL ART) FOLLOWING THE CHARACTER'S OVERNIGHT SUCCESS." SHUSTER OVERSAW A STUDIO THAT INCLUDED PAUL CASSIDY, LEO NOWAK, LEONARD SIARIS AND WAYNE BORING. "WE HAD TO TURN THE STUFF OUT LIKE A FACTORY!," SHUSTER RECALLED. "I WAS INVOLVED WITH THE INITIAL LAYOUTS AND THE PENCILLING; MY STAFF DID MAINLY THE BACKGROUNDS AND THE INKING.
"THE ONE THING THEY DID NOT INK WAS SUPERMAN'S FACE!" FOR AN 8-TO-10-YEAR PERIOD, I DID EVERY FACE of SUPERMAN! THERE WAS NOBODY ELSE THAT COULD REALLY CATCH THE SPIRIT OF--THE FEELING-- OF SUPERMAN!"
SHUSTER BASED THIS EARLY PORTRAIT OF LOIS LANE ON JOANNE CARTER (LATER MRS. HENRY ARMES!)
SUPERMAN AND LOIS MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ACTION!
YOU NEEDN'T BE AFRAID OF ME. I WON'T HARM YOU.
SUPERMAN
HE HAD A SUPERMAN-LIKE APPEARANCE, LAUGHING."
SHUSTER

Winter 1939/40 (#3) Dec. 1939 (#19) Spring 1940 (#4) Summer 1940 (#5) Sep./Oct. 1940 (#6)

Sep. 1941 (#46) May 1942 (#48) Jul./Aug. 1942 (#17) Sep. 1942 (#52) Sep/.Oct. 1942 (#18)



Jan./Feb. 1943 #20 Apr. 1943 (#59) Jul./Aug. 1943 (#23) Aug. 1943 (#65) Sep./Oct. 1943 (#24)

WAYNE BORING
AS THE SUPERMAN TREND BEGAN TO TAKE OFF IN THE 40's, DOZENS OF ARTISTS LIKE JACK BURNLEY, AL PLASTINO, IRWIN HASEN, WIN MORTIMER AND GEORGE PAPP LENT A PENCIL AND BRUSH TO PRODUCE HIS MANY ADVENTURES...
1954
...BUT THE WORK OF WAYNE BORING EMERGES AS THE MOST NOTABLE OF THE 'STABLE' ARTISTS! BORING SALVAGED THE MAN OF STEEL...
SCIENCE
ROCKET
MAGN
METROPOL
US POST OFFICE

FAR LEFT: "SUPERMAN IN SUPERMAN LAND!" ACTION #210, 1955 ABOVE & ABOVE RIGHT: PEN & INK SKETCHES BY BORING IN 1984 SENT TO FAN HARRY MATETSKY

Jun. 1940 (#25) Apr. 1956 (#215) May 1956 (#216) Jan. 1957 (#224) Apr. 1958 (#239)

...BY TRANSFORMING HIM INTO A MASSIVE, MUSCLED VISION OF VIRILE PERFORMANCE! HIS EXPRESSIVE FACES AND TIGHT, INCISIVE RENDERING BREATHED NEW LIFE INTO SUPERMAN'S TIRED HULK...
...CITIES BECAME SKYSCRAPERED STYLIZATIONS of VERTICAL LINES!
SUPERMAN BEGAN TO LOOK THE PART.' BORING'S CLASSIC FIGURE REMAINS AS THE MODEL FOR TODAY'S SUPERMAN!"
~JIM STERANKO, THE STERANKO HISTORY OF COMICS VOL.1, 1970
1954

Oct. 1949 (#137) Jan. 1956 #102 Aug. 1956 (#219) Dec. 1956 (#223) Aug. 1957 (#231)

CURT SWAN
O THE BABY BOOM GENERATION THAT GREW UP ON HIS WORK, CURT SWAN WAS, IS, AND FOREVER WILL BE THE DEFINITIVE SUPERMAN ARTIST! WHO DREW SUPERMAN LONGER THAN ANYONE--OVER THIRTY YEARS! I CAN ONLY ASSUME I HUNG ON SUPERMAN SOLELY TO BE NEAR CURT SWAN!
THIS FULL-PAGE PIN-UP IS FROM SUPERMAN #2--PAGE QUANTITY: 1,165.

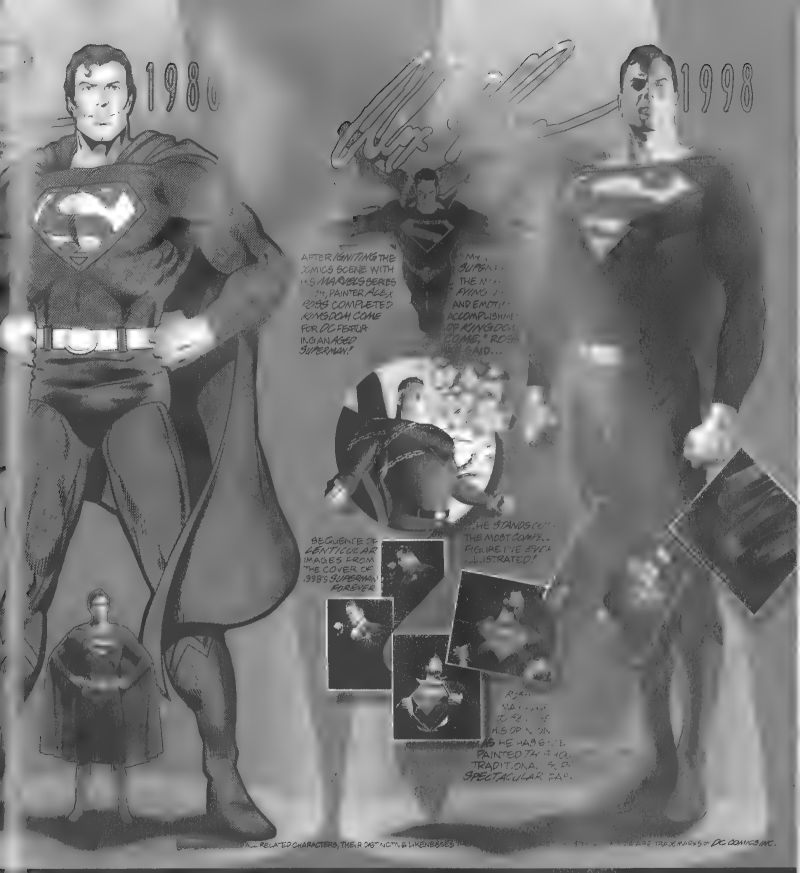
Jan. 1959 (#126) Feb. 1959 (#127) Apr. 1961 (#144) May 1961 (#145) Jul. 1961 (#146)

"I GET MORE ENJOYMENT OUT OF SEEING A YOUNG ONE'S SMILING FACE STARING INTO A COMIC BOOK THAT I DREW THAN I COULD POSSIBLY GET OUT OF HAVING ALL THE AWARDS, PRAISE AND ACCOLADES IN THE WORLD".
— CURT SWAN, 1996

Aug. 1961 (#147) Oct. 1961 (#148) Nov. 1961 (#149) Feb. 1962 (#151) Oct. 1962 (#156)

SUPERMAN
JAN. 1971
ACTION COMICS
APRIL 1972
AFTER LONG TIME SUPERMAN EDITOR MORT WEISINGER RETIRED IN 1970. JULIUS SCHWARTZ TOOK OVER THE TITLE AND BEGAN STREAMLINING THE MAN OF STEEL. WHILE CURT SWAN CONTINUED AS THE MAIN PENCILLER, THE BAHEMENT ARTISTS NEAL ADAMS WAS CALLED BY SCHWARTZ FOR COVERS & OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.
JAMIE THE STAN SOLOMON TAKES OVER AS EDITOR KING AND PROMPTLY HE JUMPED HIS DC CAREER IN THE OVERSIZED SUPERMAN V. MUHAMMAD ALI COMIC BOOK "THE DEAL" THE SUPERMAN STORY ADAMS NEVER DI
NEAL ADAMS ART FROM BACK COVER OF "SUPERMAN" #233, JUNE '72
--TO QUOTE THE KEYWORD OF THE SUPERMAN LEGEND, BYRNE SAID, "I'D TRY TO MAKE SUPERMAN AS EXCITING AS THE PRIMAL SUPERMAN OF YESTERDAY." TO TRY TO RECREATE A CHARACTER MORE AKIN TO THE MOTION COMIC AUDIENCE, BYRNE INCORPORATED THE LOOK AND FEEL OF CHRISTOPHER REEVE'S MOVIE SUPERMAN (1978 '84) TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL!
TIME
HE'S 50!
ABOVE U
FIGURE A
COVER O
THE FAR
ISSUE OF
BYRNE'S
ISSUE DE

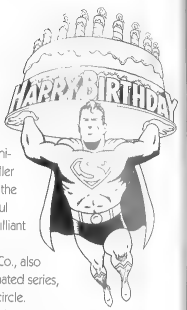
Feb. 1968 (#204) Apr. 1968 (#205) Jun. 1969 (#185) Nov. 1970 (#199) Mar. 1971 (#398)


1988
1998
AFTER SIGNITAING THE X-MEN SCENE WITH ...S MARRIES SERIES ... PAINTER ALEX ROSS COMPLETED KINGDOM COME FOR DC FEATURING AN AGED SUPERMAN!
SEQUENCE OF LENTICULAR IMAGES FROM THE COVER OF 1998's SUPERMAN FOREVER
...HE STANDS AS ... THE MOST COMPE... FIGURE IN EVER... ILLUSTRATED!
AND HE HAS GONE PAINTED TRADITIONAL SPECTACULAR FA...
...RELATED CHARACTERS, THEIR DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES TM... ...ALL TRADEMARKS OF DC COMICS INC.

Feb. 1988 (#597) Mar. 1988 (#598) May 1988 (#600) 1996 (#2) 1996 (#4)

The Story Behind this Month's Color Section

by Arlen Schumer



When Fiona Russell, Curator/Director of Operations of the Words & Pictures Museum asked me to create a series of didactic panels about Superman's graphic history for their "Spotlight on Superman" exhibit, the old saw, "Be careful what you wish for… you may well get it" sprang to mind. Just last year, I wrote and designed "The Graphic History of Batman" for Words & Pictures' Batman Retrospective—10 55" x 27" panels that fit into the 5 double-sided frames that hang suspended in the Museum's Permanent Collection gallery—and, though they were a lot of work, I was pleased with how they turned out, and so confidently crowed to Ms. Russell that if Words & Pictures were ever to plan an exhibition on Superman, I would love to design a treatment of similar scope. "You may well get it" indeed! I'm thrilled and honored to be able to present my take on the arts and artists that have shaped Superman over the past 60 years.

Though I would say Batman is my favorite comic book character, the iconic qualities of Superman—the primary colors he wears, the "S" shield (as recognizable as the swastika), the telescopic logotype by Ira Schnapp (as recognizable as the Coca-Cola logo)—are maybe more primal, and appeal to the graphic designer in me. And perhaps more importantly, the Weisinger-era Superman stories probably formed the basis of my moral upbringing—while Curt Swan was my first "favorite artist" (though I didn't even know his name at the time, thanks to DC's no-credit policy)! As a professional illustrator, with my wife and partner, color artist Sherri Wolfgang, I recently designed a couple of Superman 3-D diorama greeting cards for the Pop Shots company (for which I needed my pencil drawings approved by Joe Orlando, then DC's overseer of licensed artwork). And most recently, I gave a slide show memorial retrospective on Curt Swan for the Connecticut chapter of the National Cartoonists Society.

I chose my title, "The Art History of Superman," not only to differentiate it from my Batman title, but for the chance to design with the original, classic Action Comics logotype "A," my favorite graphic "A." I approach these panels as if I were creating giant double-page magazine spreads, highlighting the visual material and supplementing it with columns and captions of text. Unlike the Batman project, I only have 6 panels to work with this time around, so my selection and editing must be judicious. After leading with Joe Shuster's proto-Superman drawings and his original black and white newspaper panels (cut up and reconfigured to form page 1 of *Action Comics* #1), I titled panel #2 "Shuster and Company," because some of the earliest and most iconic Superman images were created by Shuster "ghosts" like Fred Ray, who drew the first—and best—patriotic Superman cover, issue #14 (January-February 1941).

As a lifetime lover of the Superman cartoons by Max and Dave Fleischer—still the greatest realistic human figure cartoons—I feel they deserve a panel of their own. Not only were they amazingly faithful to Shuster's original model of the character, but their influence on today's comic artists and animators is undeniably great: Frank Miller dedicated his Dark Knight in part to the Fleischer brothers, while the beautiful Batman: The Animated Series is a brilliant homage to the Superman cartoons; Batman's creators, Bruce Timm and Co., also designed the recent Superman animated series, thus bringing the Fleischer look full circle.

Wayne Boring, the Superman artist of the 1950s (though his career began as one of Shuster's earliest assistants and continued through the '60s), commands his own panel. To me, Boring is the equivalent of Dick Sprang—the distinctive yet uncredited ghost artist who became known to the Baby Boom Generation as the "good" Superman artist, largely through the reprints in the Superman annuals of the '60s.

But the Superman artists of that decade—and possibly, in my opinion, the character's definitive delineator—was Curt Swan, who drew Superman practically full-time from 1958 through '86. His body of work is so staggering—literally thousands of pages and covers (see *Comic Book Marketplace* #57, March '98, for a Swan checklist)—that to limit Swan to one panel is almost a disservice to the breadth of his career. To my eye, his best work divides roughly into that inked by the late George Klein (who was the Joe Sinnott to Swan's Jack Kirby) in the '60s, and the great Murphy Anderson in the early '70s.

With only one panel left to sum up Superman's post-Swan artistic history, I decided to turn the final panel into a triptych: Superman by Neal Adams (representing the '70s, as he and writer Denny O'Neil were called in by Weisinger-successor Julius Schwartz to modernize the Man of Steel, as they had done to Batman prior), John Byrne (who in '86 revamped Superman's entire history, while his drawing incorporated the feel of Christopher Reeve's movie Superman), and Alex Ross, whose photo-realistic, painted Superman defines the character for the '90s—not the aged Superman of his *Kingdom Come* series, but his most recent depiction of the short-haired, primary-colored, classic Superman (dramatically rendered on DC's Superman Forever lenticular cover). Ross' Superman harkens back to Shuster's, bookending my graphic retrospective.

The Words & Pictures Museum's "Spotlight on Superman" exhibit ran from July 2 through August, 1998.

Special thanks to Bill Sienkiewicz for his help with video-capture graphics used on pages 42 and 43.

Arlen Schumer creates comic book art for the advertising and editorial markets, with his wife, color artist Sherri Wolfgang, as The Dynamic Duo Studio in Westport, Connecticut. Their work can be seen on the web at www.theispot.com/artist/Dynamic Duo; E-mail: DuoStudio@aol.com.

CAPTAIN KRYPTON'S SUPERMAN QUIZ

1. Which one of these products has never used the name "Superman": Shaving cream, bread, popcorn, beer, toilet paper, or moccasins?
2. Which Golden Age comic features Superman with blond hair?
3. Why do so many Superman products carry a 1944 copyright date?
4. What is Lana Lang's mother's maiden name?
5. Which issue of Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen was the first to be approved by the Comics Code Authority?
6. What do Superman and Stalin have in common?
7. Clark Kent worked for the Daily Star and Daily Planet. What other newspaper has he written for?
8. What's the name of the newspaper in Metropolis, Illinois?
9. What person links Superman, Elvis Presley, and Johnny Weissmuller?
10. Which two Lois Lane key issues are usually cited as the most undervalued?
11. Superman first appeared with Batman on the cover of which Golden Age comic?
12. Who wrote the screen play for the Superman movie?
13. Who is the Nembo Kid?
14. Lois Lane becomes Superwoman for the first time in which Golden Age comic?
15. What famous Super pet was given Super powers by X-Kryptonite?

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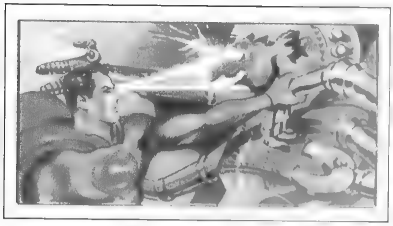


The Strange

WHEN THE FANS OF THE MAN OF STEEL TALK ABOUT their favorite stories, names like The Death of Superman, Superman Red & Blue and Kingdom Come are always mentioned. Myself, I like to remember when Superman killed the Loch Ness Monster.

Yeah, that's right. In Monster of the Loch (#3), our hero is invited to Scotland and faces the beast. "Superman turned on his super-vision and stood stock still. The power of Superman forced the monster to collapse and die."

It's not Earth-6 or an imaginary story, but from those ultra-rare collectibles called the "Primrose Cards." In 1967, the Primrose Confectionary Company in England signed with National Periodicals to produce a series of 50 enclosure cards. They're not seen much, partly due to their small size (1 1/4" x 2 1/2") and being a foreign product. But they feature nice graphics and... strange... stories.

Apparently, the writers received no research material from National or decided to ignore it. Nowhere in the stories is there any mention of the Daily Planet, Lois Lane, Kryptonite, or even Clark Kent. Superman is "on" all the time. He does hang out with Jimmy Olsen and Lori the Mermaid (Lemaris) a lot though. Luthor and Brainiac are around as well. To make up for it, the writers gave him several more opponents like the Crooked Professor (#11, Arrested in Space) and the evil race known as the Vulpians (#7, Forearm beats Firearms). In one story, Superman punished Brainiac for even trying to contact them (#48, Saucer Surprise).

Also, the stories give Superman powers never seen in comics over here. He turns invisible (#38, Racing Scare), and uses his "Superpower" to shoot

Superman Pr

Case of the Imrose Cards

BY MIKE CURTIS

lethal lightning from his finger (#31, Shattered Shark), to form a force field (#17, Useless Rockets), paralyze criminals (#23, Supervision Power), or form rocks out of thin air! (#18, Speed Boat Flight).

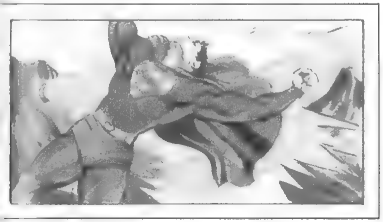
But the cards have an odd charm as several of them possess an almost fairy tale flavor. In #10 we see Superman "staying with friends in the Alps." Brainiac has robot "gremlins" (#8), and he and Luthor "shout in terror... and run to their hideout" when they see Superman standing on the tailfin of their rocket (#44).

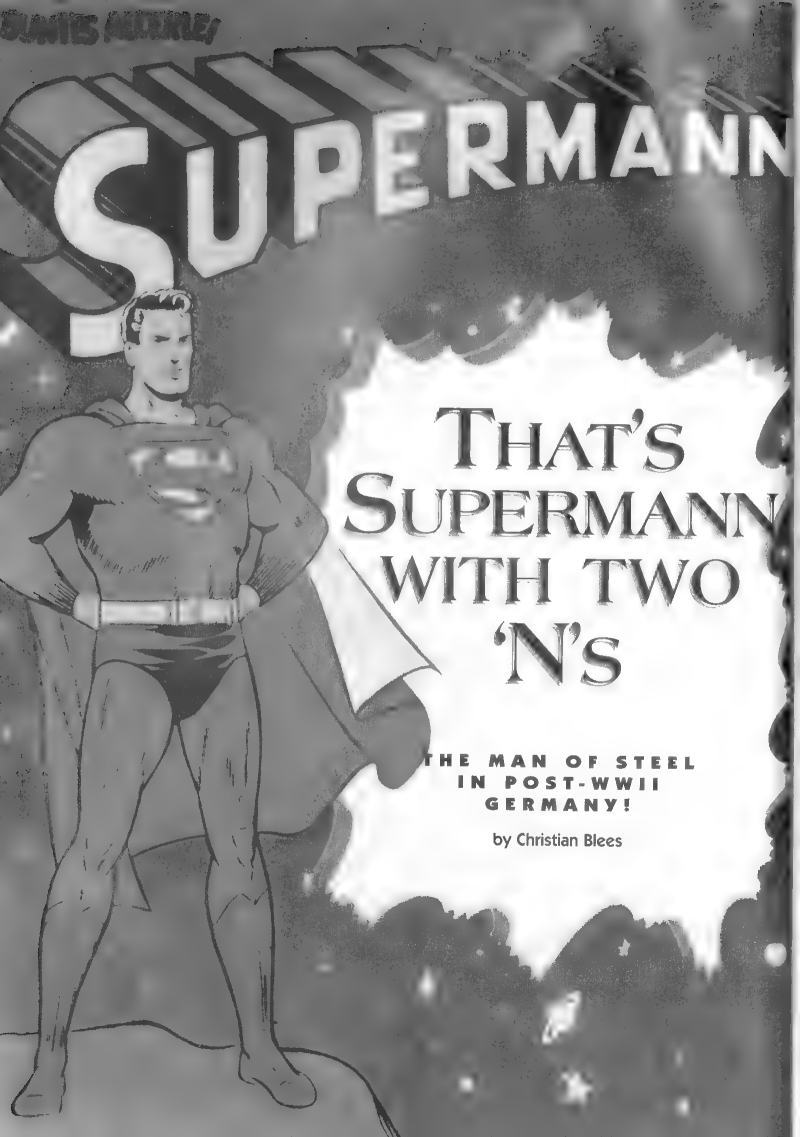
The most incredible card of all is #28 (Bam versus Pow!) which begins "Superman had returned to the past where wars were still fought..."

The series paints a picture of a benevolent big brother, who "patrols the sky" (#17) and has time for his loved ones: "Superman could not pass on his amazing powers to his friends... but he was able to build wonderful things for them" (#21). The saga ends on a friendly note, describing a Superman who might even be your neighbor. From card #50, (Crazy Bike) "Superman wanted to try out an old motorbike. Everyone said it would fall to pieces, but with Superman astride, the old bike flew like the wind."

SUPERMAN
Series of 50
3
MONSTER OF THE LOCH
Superman had been invited to the Scottish Loch where a terrible monster had been seen. As Superman waded into the lake, there was a great roaring and the monster leapt out of the water. Superman turned on his supervision and stood dead still. The power of Superman forced the monster to collapse and die.
Primrose Confectionary Co. Limited
Slough, England
© National Periodical Publicity Inc
1967
Printed in England

Mike Curtis, formerly a mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper, now writes Shanda the Panda one of the leading anthropomorphic slice-of-life comics. His wife Carole writes Katmandu, a furry adventure comic and together, under the title Shanda Fantasy Arts, they publish eight titles. Mike has been collecting anything and everything connected with the Man of Steel since 1972, amassing a collection that includes a whopping 16,000 Superman-related collectibles.





THAT'S SUPERMANN WITH TWO 'N'S

THE MAN OF STEEL IN POST-WWII GERMANY!

by Christian Blees

During his 60-year career, The Man of Steel beat monsters, aliens and super-gangsters. But if he had known in advance which problems were waiting for him on the German comic book market after fighting successfully against the Nazis during World War II, he probably never would have crossed the Atlantic for a second time…

The super-dilemma began shortly after the end of WWII. Until then, almost no one in Germany had heard anything of Superman, let alone read one of his comic books. Then in 1948 American newspaper comic strips were being published for the first time in German papers. These "compilations" of strips paved the way for comic books on the German market.

The words "first" and "Superman" have become almost synonymous in comic book history… and Germany is no exception. The Man Of Steel was one of the first American comic book heroes to ever try to become established in Germany. But unlike his many success stories in the States, in Germany, he failed.

The first real comic book attempt came in 1950, when German publisher Zauberkreis Verlag (originally a pulp publisher) produced three *Superman* issues. Each of the 32-pagers contained an early Superman story in black and white, together with Tommy Tomorrow, Johnny Quick, Green Arrow, and others. After three issues the experiment ran aground. The market for comic book superheroes, it seemed, wasn't fully developed yet.

The second comic book try came just three short years later when publisher Aller Verlag from Hamburg made an attempt inside its publication *Buntes Allerlei* (which is like the American *Showcase* title). *Buntes Allerlei* originally featured stories like "Phantom" by Ray Moore, "Rip Kirby" by Alex Raymond and "Katzenjammer Kids" by Charles Winner. In issue #42 which hit the newsstands in Autumn of 1953, "Supermann" (the German style had two "n"s) made his first appearance inside *Buntes Allerlei*.

During the next year, *Buntes Allerlei* featured 21 ten-page stories starring Superman and crime fighting colleagues Batman, Green Arrow, and Aquaman… reprinting primarily material from 1940's *Action* and *Superman*. The title was ultimately canceled in August, 1954 because of low sales. The last issue of *Buntes Allerlei* was numbered 17 (1954).

For more than a decade, no publisher had the courage to try a third attempt to establish a Superman comic book on the German market. While funnies had been a huge success in Germany since the fifties, superhero books seemed to have no chance at all. But then in September, 1966, Ehapa, one of the two big German comic book publishers, announced "It's Superman!" on the cover of its new Superman book. Not only did it sport a different look (with only one "n" this time) but the mag also contained a lot of reader contests (first issue had a trip around the world as first prize) and gimmicks (like posters). Ehapa worked hard to capture reader favour… and it worked! The 32-page, coloured comic book was a huge success nearly right from the beginning. Later (in 1967) the title was changed to *Superman/Batman*, perhaps as a result of the spiraling popularity of Batman after the debut of the TV show in 1966 and the "new look" Batman from Schwartz and Anderson beginning in 1964.

The German readers didn't seem to care that their book didn't have any continuing storylines, as every issue contained a wild mixture of stories taken from

Supermann splash page from Buntes Allerlei #16, 1954.

FACING PAGE: **Buntes Allerlei cover #13 (1954).**
AT RIGHT: **Two of the very first Supermann comics published in Germany (1950), only five years after World War II ended.**

the original *Superman*, *World's Finest*, *Batman*, and *Brave & Bold* titles. Nor did the Ehapa editors seem too concerned with continuity… or the quality of the product. This was demonstrated by the fact that in some cases they eliminated some panels just to make sure stories fit the limited number of pages in the 32-page format.

But in spite of it all, the book was a success… so much so in fact that in 1969 Ehapa took another title that it published, *Mickyvision*, and gave it to Superman and his friends. Up until that time *Mickyvision* had been a book that mainly contained stories of European artists. But from issue #4 (1969) on, all attention was lavished on DC superhero stories. Because the bi-weekly titles (*Superman/Batman* and *Mickyvision*) alternated every other week, it meant that Superman was on the German newsstands every week!

The years went by, and in the mid 1970s Superman was at the peak of his success in Germany. The *Superman Batman* title sold about 200,000 copies a month, which paved the way for even more DC titles. Batman (still appearing in the *Superman* title), Flash, Green Lantern and Wonder Girl (Wonder Woman in Germany) got their own titles. And Ehapa also printed international pocket books, special editions, magazines and… lots more superhero titles in different formats. By 1977 Superman and his friends were at the top.

Soon everyone was predicting that the success of the Superman titles in Germany would go even higher in the late '70s, when the first Superman movie hit the theaters. They apparently guessed wrong….

Inexplicably, the 1980s saw a sudden decrease in popularity – a decline that continues today. Although no one really knows why, some have speculated that former readers had grown up and lost their interest in superheros… combined with a reduction in the number of new readers. Eventually the sales of *Superman/Batman* fell below 40,000 copies and Ehapa canceled it along with all its other superhero titles at the end of 1985.

"We couldn't make money with it any longer," recalls today's Ehapa chief ed… for Georg Tempel. "But we still had the license on the Superman series. So when DC announced the John Byrne story-driven 'Man of Steel' we started another attempt… [a] bigger format… [we] took the title *Der neue Superman*… the new Superman… the revived Ehapa Superman book hit the newsstands in 1987—and failed. "After nine issues that didn't sell… we finally quit the license agreement," Tempel says. A total of 509 Ehapa *Superman* comic books, *Superman* comics were dead for the third time in Germany.

The premiere issue of Superman ist da! (Sept 1966) used only one "n" in the magazine's logo. Note the lower right-hand corner… the title was also designed to sell to German-speaking Swiss, Austrians, and even residents of Luxemburg.

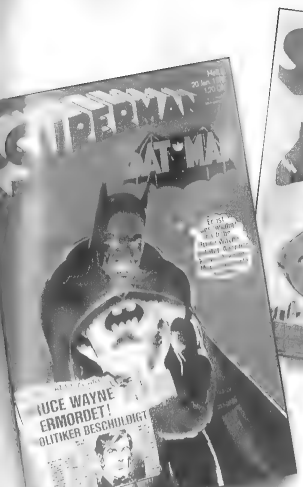
Willkommen Supergirl! German Silver Age readers also cheered when Superman revealed Supergirl's existence to the world in the Dec., 1966 issue.

New hope for German Superman fans came in 1989, when the German comic book market suddenly and dramatically changed. The main reason was Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight* returns, the first ever trade paperback comic book that had been published in Germany (up to then German readers only knew ordinary comic books, magazines and pocket books). The medium suddenly made a change from "cheap literature" to a sort of modern art. When the "quality newspapers" accepted the cultural value of the medium of modern comic books, a kind of breakthrough occurred in the German market. The result was a new group of comic books, most of them trade paperbacks. Superman (and only Superman) got another chance – not in the traditional format, but in magazines and hardcovers published by the small publisher Norbert Hethke Verlag. Until then, Norbert Hethke Verlag had mainly published reprints of original 1950's German comic books.

NHV was hoping to make some money out of the "new" superhero comics, influenced not only by the success of Frank Miller's Batman, but also by the 1989 *Batman* movie. NHV published a broad variety of Superman and Batman titles, but (you guessed it) the attempt also failed. The likely reasons were a lack of storyline continuity and an expensive format ($7 for a 48-page-issue). The end of this fourth incarnation came in 1991, after 22 issues in three different formats.

Later efforts included publisher Carlsen's (besides Ehapa, another large German comic book publisher) attempt with "The Death Of Superman" in 1995. (German readers had to shell out $20 a comic book). After about a dozen trade paperbacks (including "The Return of Superman" and "Doomsday"), Carlsen canceled almost all its paperback titles. Not only Carlsen's, but almost the whole German trade paperback comic market had totally collapsed within a few years.

Shortly afterwards Carlsen had quit the license agreement with DC, and a younger publishing company (Dino Comics) took over. And for the second time in eight years, the German comic book market again changed dramatically. Trade paperbacks were out and the original comic book format made a



furious comeback—and with it the superhero comics! (The Dino team's material was edited very carefully and contained continuing storylines, beginning with DC's Zero Hour). Since 1996, Dino has published a 48 page Superman monthly that sells for $2.50… readers get two original books in one German issue.

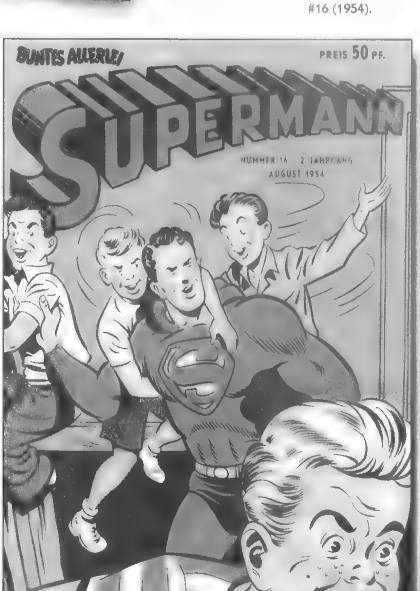
And they are taken seriously. For the very first time in German comic book history there is a Superman letter page in which items of the DC Universe are discussed in a serious manner.

Paralleling this sixth revival of Superman in Germany, there is an increasing demand for the first German *Superman* books, particularly the 1950's issues and the first Ehapa printing from 1966. You won't find anybody who is willing to pay $150,000 for an *Action* #1 over here, but the official German comic book price guide lists the first three Superman books from 1950 in NM at $1,500 each and the first Ehapa issue from 1966 at $600! For German collectors, that is quite a lot of money.

For Superman's 60th anniversary, Ehapa is going to publish an exclusive reprint edition comic box of the first dozen Ehapa issues (from 1966 and 1967) this summer, selling for $100. But besides the anniversary, there is another reason for these reprints… the huge success of another Ehapa reprint edition from 1997. It features another American comic book legend that, unlike Superman, had no problems getting established in the German comic book market. From its very first issue (starting in 1951) this hero's title sold an average of 700,000 copies per bi-weekly issue! His name? Mickey Mouse!

Ehapa issues of Superman/Batman featured the Flash and other Justice League favorites.

Christian Blees (age 34) is first and foremost a German comic book collector. In real life he works as a freelance journalist and apologizes in advance for his English.



Buntes Allerlei #16 (1954).

"In fact, his Disney scripts really looked like Superman scripts!"

"Scrooge McDuck is strolling along the hall of his private museum when, by accident, he resurrects the mummy of an ancient pharaoh. In a time machine together with Gyro and Donald, he brings the pharaoh back to his era. The pharaoh enslaves the three travelers, but they manage to escape. For a while they keep horsing around with time, until they finally arrive at the end of the world. They watch the moon destroying the earth, escaping this fate just by chance . . ."

You could always recognize when a Duck story was written by Jerry Siegel. Of course, at the time the above story was published (the mid-1970s), we didn't know who the story authors were, since it was still usual practice of the subsidiary companies of Walt Disney Productions (like Mondadori in Italy) not to give credit to the authors. Nevertheless, his stories had a feel-

Donald gets a jolt of heroic proportions transforming him into a foolhardy fowl.

ing all their own, and were easily recognized by avid readers.

The first story Siegel wrote for Mondadori was "Paperino e la macchina dell'Eroismo" ("Donald Duck and the Hero Machine"), about a machine that is able to turn even the most cowardly guy into a fearless devil. Wonderfully illustrated by Giorgio Cavazzano (one of the greatest Italian Disney artists), this story was published in issue #878 of the weekly *Topolino*, and almost presented a clear departure from the Italian "house" style. Some European comic historians have even suggested that plot and style elements were reminiscent of Siegel's Golden Age stories.

In fact, his Disney scripts really looked like Superman scripts!," remembered Massimo Marconi, head of the scripts department at Mondadori for more than ten years. "He sent us his scripts in tin-foils, by air-mail. Most of those scripts (and they were full scripts, not just basic plots) were actually translated by my wife, who was working as a freelancer for Mondadori. Actually, many times we used to give his scripts in their original language to Guido Scala (another well-known Italian artist); he had been living in Australia for a while, so he could draw directly from them."

Siegel's scripts have also been graced by others among the best Italian artists; besides Giorgio Cavazzano, we should at least mention Romano Scarpa, together with one of his former assistants, Luciano Gatto. Often, the sheer weirdness of the art actually matched the craziness of the plot. In "Paperino e la Voce dal Nulla" ("Donald and the Voice from Nowhere"), a dying alien superhero contacts Donald from his retirement home and graces him with the power to sell everything from vacuum cleaners to "zebrauto," cars that look like zebras!

Jerry Siegel's output was quite impressive... he turned out approximately 20 stories per year. During his freelancing for Mondadori beginning in 1972 (the "Hero Machine" appeared September 24th of that year) until 1979, Siegel wrote 139 stories for the weekly *Topolino*, and dozens more for the monthly *Almanacco Topolino*. These stories have been reprinted many times in series like *I Classici di Walt Disney*, considered the showcase of the best Disney stories published in Italy... with translations appearing in other Disney subsidiary-published periodicals all over Europe, especially those produced by Denmark's Egmont and their German branch, Ehapa. Some of them were produced for the "Studio Program," the American branch of Disney producing comics. (The Studio Program actually recruited people from overseas to do them). Unknown to many American collectors for years, some of these "lost" European-produced stories have been re-translated back to English and appeared in some Western/Gold Key comic books.

The man who was in charge of recruiting talent for the Studio Program in Italy was Mario Gentilini, who was simultaneously the editor of *Topolino*. He ran the weekly for more than thirty years, starting from its first issue in 1948. In May 1971 (on one of his visits to Burbank, California) Gentilini had his first and only meeting with Jerry Siegel. The two made a gentlemen's agreement and Siegel's contribution to Disney Ducks

FLYING DONALD
BY DON ROSA

SIEGEL'S SECRET STORIES!

A DECADE OF ITALIAN DUCK TALES

BY FABIO GADDUCCI
& MIRKO TAVOSANIS

Siegel's scripting of cataclysmic collisions caused nightmares for impressionable youngsters.

began. (In fact, the end of Siegel's freelancing coincides with the retirement of Mario Gentilini in 1980.)

The last Italian story based upon a Jerry Siegel script, "Topolino e il fantasma della valle" ("Mickey Mouse and the Phantom of the Valley") appeared at the end of 1979, in *Topolino* #1257. It is not known to us if he decided to simply stop sending materials, or if the people at Mondadori felt that his stories (heavy with sci-fi and mystery themes) no longer fit the Disney mold. What is known is that Jerry Siegel stories were (and still are) remarkable creations… full of inventiveness, [illegible] dramatic action. (As an example, the "end of the world scene," mentioned in the first paragraph, he wrote is quite chilling… as children we were both absolutely flabbergasted by it!)

Jerry Siegel's contributions to early comic history is well-known and highly documented. But his little-known and [illegible] writing during the Bronze Age is a [illegible] high [illegible] in the forty-year history of Italian Disney comics [illegible]. It stands today as a testament to Siegel's incredible genius.

CBM CHECKLIST

JERRY SIEGEL DISNEY DUCK FAVORITES

KEY TO DATA

Translated Story Title (Issue No., Date, Year, Starring Character)

Abbreviations:

JrW = Junior Woodchucks
US = Uncle Scrooge
DD = Donald Duck
HDL = Huey, Dewey, & Louie
BB = Beagle Boys

Published in Mickey Mouse Alamanac (Monthly)

Cosmic Overturning (#199, Jul, 1973, US)

The Robo-Detective (#209, May, 1974, US)
The Black Cat (#210, Jun, 1974, US)
The Hostile Globe (#216, Dec, 1974, US)
The Fish Effect (#254, Feb, 1978, US)
Arfcan Birillium (#258, Jun, 1978, US)
The Tibetan Judgement (#271, Jul, 1979, US)
The Golden Helmet (#274, Oct, 1979, US)

Published in Mickey Mouse (Weekly)

The Hero Machine (#878, Sep 24, 1972, DD)
Interplanetary Manual (#690, Dec 17, 1972, JrW)
The Treasure of Atlantis (#893, Jan 21, 1973, US)
HDL visit the Magical Forest (#896, Jan 28, 1973, HDL)
The Raid Through the Centuries (#911, May 13, 1973, US)
The Unlucky Accident (#917, Jun 24, 1973, US)
JrW Against the Terrible Toymaster (#922, Jul 29, 1973, JrW)
Spymaster (#929, Sep 16, 1973, DD)
Duckburg Vanishes (#932, Oct 7, 1973, US)
The Giant Statue (#933, Oct 14, 1973, US)
The Money Menace (#946, Jan 13, 1974, US)
The Wizard of Duckburg (Pt.1) (#954, Mar 10, 1974, DD)
The Wizard of Duckburg (Pt 2) (#955, Mar 17 1974, DD)
The Purple Monkeys (#959, Apr 14 1974, US)
The Ten Billion Dollar Peanut (#969, Jun 23, 1974, US)
DD against Colossor (#978, Aug 25, 1974, DD)
The Voice Coming From Nowhere (#989, Nov 10, 1974, DD)
The Lost Memory Odessey (#989, Nov 10, 1974, US)
The Toy Master is Back (#922, Dec 1, 1974, JrW)
Uncle Scrooge in Neverland (#993, Dec 8, 1974, US)
The Golden G Mystery (#993, Dec 8, 1974, US)
The Bin Of The One Hundred Traps (#1001, Feb 2, 1975, US)
Max the Avenger (#1003, Feb 16, 1975, DD)
The Oi-Oi Fly (#1019, Jun 8, 1975, US)
The Robbery Genius (#1022, Jun 29, 1975, BB)
The Caped Shark (#1027, Aug 3, 1975, US)
The Multiplying Howl (#1032, Sep 7, 1975, US)
The Provoked Toymaster (#1040, Nov 2, 1975, US)
The Disappearing Billions (#1042, Nov 6, 1975, US)
The Little Witch (#1088, Oct 3, 1976, US)
The Soloist's Chords (#1097, Dec 5, 1976, DD)
The Financial Magnet (#1123, May 22, 1977, DD)
Triangle of Terror (#1132, Aug 7, 1977, US)
Pier 18 is Not Enough for You (#1134, Aug 21, 1977, DD)
The Duckographic Development (#1137, Sep 11, 1977, US)
The Warlock's Anathema (#1145, Nov 6, 1977, US)
The Underworld Professor (#1146, Nov 3, 1977, BB)
The Backfire of Treasures (#1148, Nov 27, 1977, US)
The Awful Invasion (#1148, Nov 27, 1977, US)
The Rascality Serum (#1153, Jan 1, 1978, US)
The Rainbow Blow (#1154, Jan 8, 1978, US)
The Anti-Tumina Squad (#1155, Jan 15, 1978, DD)
The Underworld Machine (#1156, Jan 22, 1978, DD)
Terrors of Duckburg (#1194, Oct 15, 1978, JrW)
The Bad Luck Comet (#1207, Jan 14, 1979, US)
The Shock Therapy (#1208, Jan 21, 1979, DD)
Awful Secret (#1123, May 6, 1979, DD)
Beagle Boy Detectives (#1229, Jun 17, 1979, US)
The Mystery Money Box (#1244, Sep 30, 1979, HDL)
The Day of Testament (#1246, Oct 14, 1979, US)
The Ugga-Wugga Treasure (#1248, Oct 28, 1979, US)
The Happy Island Monster (#1250, Nov 11, 1979, US)

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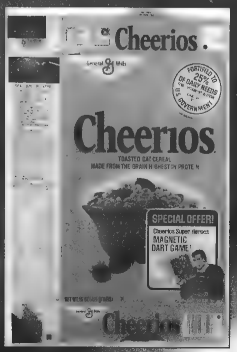
The Man of... Cereal!

Here's an interesting trivia question. "Which cereal company first sponsored the Man of Steel?" He's been on the Mills, Post, Weetabix and Kellogg's cereal boxes, but amazingly, none of these is the correct answer.

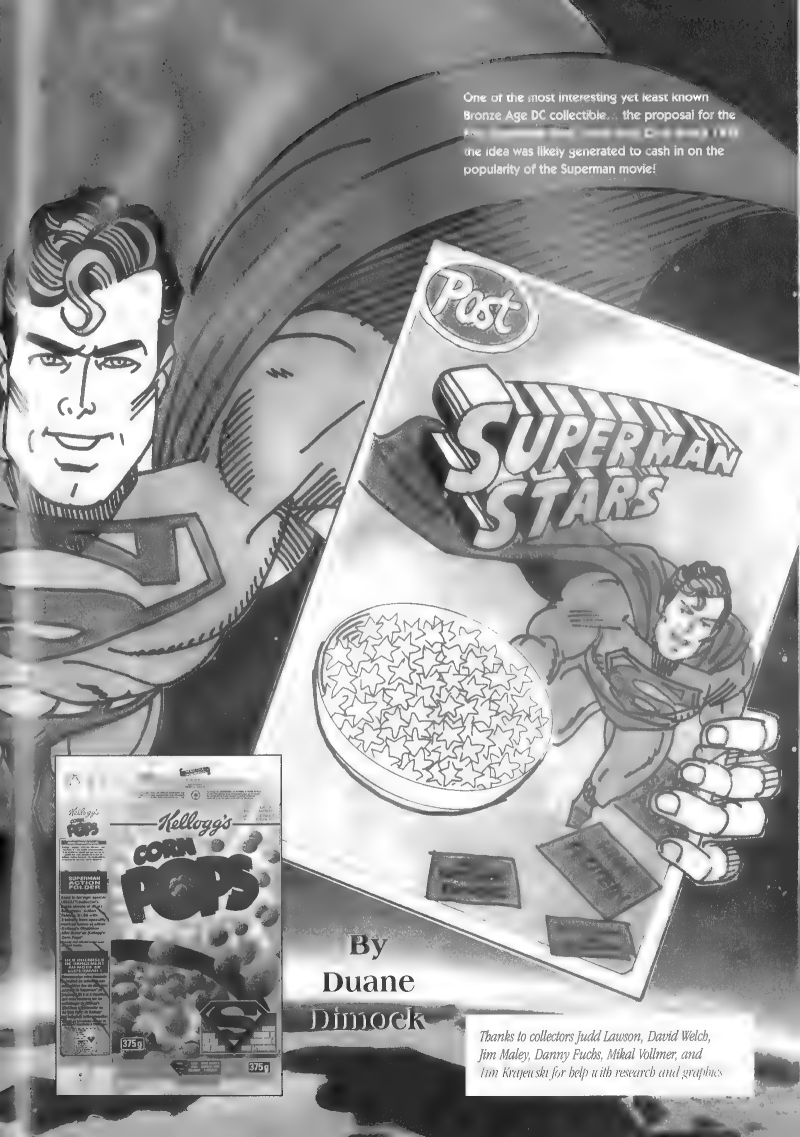
The first cereal company to sponsor Superman was actually H-O Oats. Though I have not heard nor seen an example with Superman on any H-O products or toys, they did sponsor the Superman radio shows from 1940 to 1942. H-O Oats advertised in Superman comic books, too, about it. Then Kellogg's took over in 1942, sponsoring Superman radio show for the next 15 years. Cereal magic, great promotions, Superman, but no known cereal boxes show the Man of Steel until 1946.

In 1945 (the last year of the war) Kellogg's brought out a brilliant campaign for wartime editions, two inside PEP cereals. As the war ended, they expanded the promotion with comic character buttons... and Superman was one of them. Not only was he one of them, he was THE ONE every kid want-

**SEE THE INSIDE BACK COVER FOR COLOR CEREAL BOXES



One of the most interesting yet least known Bronze Age DC collectible... the proposal for the [illegible] the idea was likely generated to cash in on the popularity of the Superman movie!



By Duane Dimock

Thanks to collectors Judd Lawson, David Welch, Jim Maley, Danny Fuchs, Mikal Vollmer, and Tim Krajewski for help with research and graphics

ed! The radio and newspapers promoted the heck out of the PEP pin "craze" and many PEP boxes featured the Superman PEP pin on the front (1946-48, 3 different boxes). On a couple of the box backs you could even get a one page comic story, of which there seems to be 8 different ones (see IBC, top shelf).

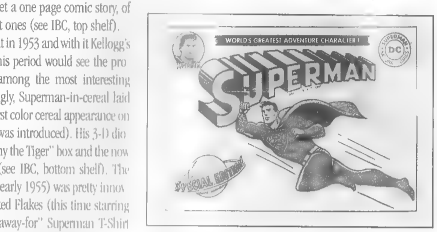
The Superman TV show came out in 1953 and with it Kellogg's massive sponsorship campaign. This period would see the production of what many feel are among the most interesting Superman boxes and toys. Amazingly, Superman-in-cereal laid low until 1954 until he made his first color cereal appearance on Frosted Flakes (only a year after it was introduced). His 3-D diorama (3 different) are on the "Tony the Tiger" box and the now extinct "Katie the Kangaroo" (see IBC, bottom shelf). The second Super offer (late 1954, early 1955) was pretty innovative and was again on Frosted Flakes (this time starring only Tony). It was a "send-away-for" Superman T-Shirt you could get for just 50¢ and a box top.

Superman continued with Kellogg's and, oddly enough, became integrated with the Corn Flakes-Norman Rockwell series. There were eight different Norman Rockwell painted kids (affectionately referred to as the "Rockwell kids") from 1954 to 1956 with Superman on the front of each cereal box as an inset. Late '54, early '55 also saw the arrival of the Superman "Dangle-Dandies", offered as a cut-out on the back (see IBC, top shelf). After cutout and assembly, the Dandie became a two-sided, four-piece, color Superman with strings attached to each piece to form a mobile. (An element that makes the Superman Dangle-Dandie especially appealing to collectors is the rotating "S" emblem in the middle of the chest.)

In 1955 they finally produced a real hands on Superman toy. Not only was it a 3-D toy, but with it you could make Superman fly! (This premium toy was re-released in 1966 as Superman and Batman). The front of the box (see IBC, third shelf) shows a flying toy and the back shows how you could be part of a Superman adventure. Also the "sling-shot Superman toy" more closely resembled Superman actor George Reeves than anything previously made. For whatever reason George's image was not used as Superman, and even weirder, in all the Kellogg's Superman promoting commercials, Superman him-

The "Gimme H-O For Breakfast" button and the relatively common Superman PEP cereal button.

The three highly collectible 1950's premium comics.

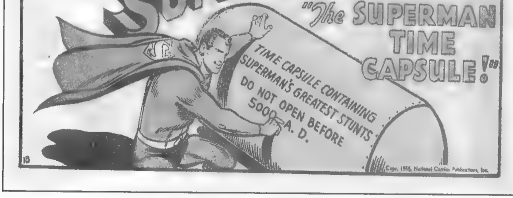


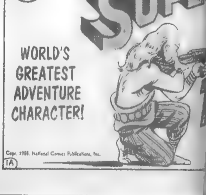
In the 1950s Kellogg's gave away a fourth comic simply called Special Edition.

self NEVER appeared in them. You would only see a swishing figure with Clark Kent, Jimmy Olsen, Lois Lane, Perry White or Inspector Henderson.

From late 1955 through early 1956 Sugar Smacks (showing Charlie Bell, a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus clown) featured what many believe is the most spectacular Superman box ever made. With a free comic in every box and a striking package, kids must've flipped for this promotion (see IBC, third shelf). The three highly collectible comics were #1-*The Supersbow of Metropolis*; #1A-*Duel in Space and Time*; and #1B-*The Superman Time Capsule* (which is not shown in Gerber). A fourth comic was given away around the same time by Kellogg's called Special Edition. This box is by far the most interesting and rarest box and there is only one known specimen. Other boxes with just a sticker offering the comics on the front exist, but have no other graphics.

A Rockwell kid is back and he blasts off with a Superman Krypton Hydro-Jet Rocket. (see IBC, second shelf) Powered by


WORLD'S GREATEST ADVENTURE CHARACTER!
SUPERMAN
in The SUPERMAN TIME CAPSULE!
TIME CAPSULE CONTAINING SUPERMAN'S GREATEST STUNTS! DO NOT OPEN BEFORE 3000 A. D.
10
Copr. 1956, National Comics Publications, Inc.



The ad from Superman #8 (Jan 1941) includes the highly collectible Daisy Krypto-Raygun, Sweat Shirt, Bubble Gum cards, and both Marx Action Toys.

water, this very ingenious pre-existing toy was adapted with a molded Superman logo on the rocket fins. You could get the $1 value pump launcher and one red translucent rocket for only 50¢ and a box top. And you could get an extra two rockets (blue and green) and command a whole rocket fleet for a measly 25¢ extra.

Though the graphics are not as good, this promotion continued into 1956 on Sugar Pops (see IBC, top shelf)

The last of the Rockwell munchkins tried to get you to send away for the official Superman belt and buckle. Large, beautiful graphics of Superman on the back (see IBC, second shelf) with the alluring words: "Kids! Wear the sign of Superman!." The special apparel could be yours for only 25¢ and a box top.

The last Super toy from the 1950s was the 1956-1957 Superman Space Satellite (see IBC, top shelf). Another pre-existing toy, it was also adapted to the line of Superman promotions. This special offer "for space fans" came with the launcher and two space satellites at for 25¢ and a box top.

From 1957 until 1975, there were no boxes with Superman on them, even though the animated TV show was popular from 966-68. (Heck, even Batman was on boxes during this era.)

Then in 1975 Kellogg's made Kal-el peddle his 1940's radio shows on Corn Flakes and the last year of Pep cereal. If you check my review of the Superman Radio Shows (put out by Radio Spirits) in a previous issue of *CBM* you won't have to go looking for the 4 LP records that cost at the time a whopping $1.50 each plus a box top.

Towards the end of the Bronze Age, (1978), Superman gave up his allegiance to Kellogg's (or was it vice versa) and defected to General Mills when the first Superman movie was released. The box front depicts Superman offering the Cheerios Super Heroes Magnetic Dart Game and the back shows all his friends and foes (see IBC, bottom shelf). For $1.25 and two box bottoms, they're all on your side when you get this fantastic Super Heroes Magnetic Dart Game!

1978 also saw the production of a foreign Superman box as England's Weetabix rendered a full figure Supe on the front and different cut-outs on the back of their box. Buyers got three of the 18 possible dynamic-action picture-cards free inside! Some of cards available were Galactic Co-Ordinator, Worldsmith, Master Summoner, Microwave Man, Resource Raider, Guardian Robot, Kryptonoid, Tri-Beast or Fremulshmat Battle Beast.

Now for the the most interesting, but least known Man Of Steel cereal box... Post's Superman Stars. Circa about 1978, this product was obviously created to ride the popularity wave of the Superman movie. You might think "finally... Superman gets his own cereal," but alas it was only on a proposal basis and no known box has ever surfaced. In fact, only a few paper cels chronicling the unrealized cereal are still floating around. The box says "All Natural Flavors and No Sugar Added." No wonder maybe that's why it didn't fly!

Even though Post didn't get Superman Stars off the ground, they did dare you to purchase the 1978 Honey-Combs with a psychedelic Superman Post poster (get it... Post Poster... uggggh) in all his flying circus glory. Cereal lovers had a chance to get one of four Superman Action Posters.

As the Bronze Age waned, Post cereals went Superman and Super Friends crazy (1979-82). Five main cereals were used for three different, but similar free inside promotions. Knowing the Superman movies would continue and that the Super Friends cartoon was (amaz- *(Continued on page 80)*

Continued from page 29

ciler in 1957. Stan is also fondly remembered for being the primary early inker on some of the greatest Superman-Batman teamups in *World's Finest Comics*. Wisely, the editors chose to pair Batman's greatest penciler, Dick Sprang, with Superman's top inker, and the results were marvelous. Sprang contributed his trademark square-jawed Batman and eclectic panel design and Kaye his Boring-influenced inking, resulting in a style that brought out the best in both characters.

Kaye stayed with DC for most of his career, leaving once in 1948 to ghost Harry Haenigsen's daily strip Penny and the Sunday strip Our Bill. But the deadlines were a killer, and he returned to the DC fold after only a few months. In 1961, he dropped comics and moved his family to Wisconsin where he went to work for his in-laws' manufacturing firm. He passed away on June 21, 1967.

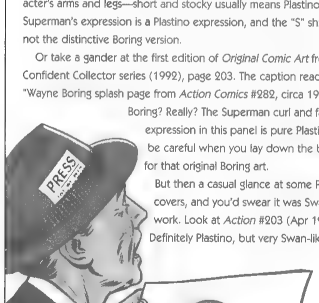
[illegible] has been replaced by Curt Swan as cover penciler. [illegible] place was taken by George Papp as the regular [illegible] Kaye's final cover of *Action Comics* was #282 with [illegible] cover on the next issue—although the cover of #282 looks a bit like Klein inks as well. If that's the case, then Kaye's final cover would have been #280. Klein, while a capable inker who followed Kaye's style to a certain extent, didn't have Kaye's flair—but then, Klein never had the chance to ink over Wayne Boring's pencils for two decades.

Is That art really by Boring?

Al Plastino drew Superman during much of the same period as Boring, even extending into the Curt Swan era. While Plastino had a distinctive style of his own, often underrated and called "hack work" by many fans, his work is often mistaken for that of Boring. It may be that DC editors felt that Boring's art was the definitive Superman, so they very well may have instructed Plastino to copy Boring. At any rate even experts sometimes get confused.

In *Amazing Heroes* #41, the cover of *Superman* #65 is presented as an example of Boring's work. But is it? Look carefully at the character's arms and legs—short and stocky usually means Plastino art. Superman's expression is a Plastino expression, and the "S" shield is not the distinctive Boring version.

Or take a gander at the first edition of *Original Comic Art* from the Confident Collector series (1992), page 203. The caption reads "Wayne Boring splash page from *Action Comics* #282, circa 1961. Boring? Really? The Superman curl and facial expression in this panel is pure Plastino. So be careful when you lay down the bucks for that original Boring art.



But then a casual glance at some Plastino covers, and you'd swear it was Swan's work. Look at *Action* #203 (Apr 1955). Definitely Plastino, but very Swan-like.

And this was before Swan took over the covers. Look at *Action* #217 (June 1956). Again, it's Plastino looking a lot like Swan.

Here's some tips on how to tell the difference, especially in artwork of the fifties and sixties:

Boring and Kaye: The curl will be prominent. The "S" shield will always be perfectly drawn with the two long sides curving. Boring's "S" is the most distinctive of any Superman artist in history. You can always identify his work from the "S." Boring's Superman looks more powerful than Swan's, and the backgrounds and skyline shots are trademark.

Plastino: Superman has a bit more of a receding hairline. The arms and legs are often stocky. The "S" symbol is usually somewhat disheveled and out of proportion, and sometimes there was no chip out of the top right of the "S" or the chip was square. (Only Jim Mooney drew a less consistent "S.") But Plastino was a very talented artist, and some of his later *Action* covers mastered difficult scenes and perspective, like the "Superman's Super-Skyscraper" cover on *Action* #228 (May 1957).

Swan and Kaye: Superman looks younger than he does under Boring or Plastino. The art is less cluttered, but Kaye's influence brings an element of Boring, making Swan's art look better than any other inker with the possible exception of Murphy Anderson. Swan's facial expressions are always happy; even his villains seemed to be cheerful. The "S" symbol is perfect, but smaller than Boring's. Swan drew it with straighter lines, but Kaye's inks transformed it so that it looked vaguely like Boring's. The tiny triangle at the bottom of the symbol is not rounded at the bottom.

Swan and Klein: Clean inking lines in the Kaye tradition, except that all vestiges of Boring are missing. The "S" symbol has no real interpretation, but it is very clean and never out of proportion as with Plastino. The tiny triangle at the bottom of the symbol often has a rounded bottom. The muscle lines beneath Superman's rib cage are quite distinctive with Klein inks.

So, who drew the cover of *Action* #206? Well, it was Win Mortimer! But that's another story!

Covering Boring and Kaye

DC has published records of cover artwork on *Action Comics*, but not on the Superman title. If the company's records are correct, Boring's first cover job was *Action* #25 (June 1940). On this cover, a still-primitive Superman is chasing a motorboat over the bay, his "S" shield not yet fully developed. Boring then drew the next eight *Action* covers, improving all the time. Kaye's first *Action* cover was #67 (September 1943) inking over Jack Burnley. The first Boring-Kaye collaboration came on *Action* #69 (Feb 1944), a rousing "action" scene featuring the Prankster and a Superman much more akin to his modern-day self.

Some of the best-remembered Boring-Kaye covers came in the mid-fifties, starting with *Action* #199 (December 1954) featuring "The Phantom Superman." The memorable cover of *Action* #209 (October 1955) showed Superman staring in awe at a flying man with a giant lightbulb being struck by lightning. Perhaps the greatest image on a Boring-Kaye cover came on *Action* #215 (April 1956) featuring "The Superman of Tomorrow." Our Superman is shown 1,000 years in the future, switching to his super identity to stop a runaway rocket, while the Superman of that era prepares to join him. This cover had it all—rockets, a futuristic skyline, and two Supermen!

The final Boring-Kaye cover was a great one: *Action* #231 (August 1957). The story was "Sir Jimmy Olsen, Knight of Metropolis," and the art had Jimmy on a bicycle jousting with the Man of Steel! The next issue saw Curt Swan begin his long run of covers, but with Kaye still manning the pen and ink—as he would do until 1961. The best-remembered Swan-Kaye cover is undoubtedly *Action* #242 (July 1958). "The Super Duel in Space" introduced Brainiac (in an interior story drawn by Al Plastino) with a cover so full of energy that it literally jumped off the rack. Superman is hovering in space, ready to throw a super punch at Brainiac, who is protected by a force field. Brainiac is grinning and warning that the punch will destroy Superman! Who could resist?

Wayne Boring was to have one more "final" *Action Comics* cover. Breaking Swan's long string, Boring both penciled and inked the cover of *Action* #353 (August 1967), near the end of his Superman comeback days. Ironically, the final Boring cover came in the year that Stan Kaye died.

Boring was also to have one more appearance on an *Action Comics* cover, this time having his name finally in lights. A blurb on the cover of *Action* #561 (November 1984) read: "EXTRA! Artist Wayne Boring returns with "The Past and Future Superman." Boring didn't draw the cover, but penciled an 8-page filler, inked by Dave Hunt, and written by E. Nelson Bridwell. In the final panel, Boring's final image of the character that defined his career—Superman thinks "I'll take the present Superman over either the past or future ones."

Boring's fans might disagree.

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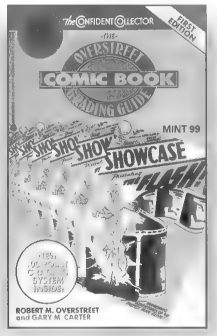
By Robert M. Overstreet & Gary M. Carter



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ROOTS OF THE SUPERMAN

Continued from page 21

Reportedly, Siegel denied ever reading *Gladiator*. It's a denial that strikes one as odd inasmuch as the book was reviewed in Siegel's early fanzine, *Science Fiction* and was considered an early milestone in mainstream SF. Perhaps Siegel's denials were a protective response to rumors that Wylie contemplated a lawsuit over what he saw were overwhelming and actionable parallels between his superman and Siegel and Shuster's character.

In fact, there's a significant point in *Gladiator* where Hugo Danner almost takes the road Clark Kent later took. Fumbling around for some purpose in life, a productive channel for his superhuman skills, Danner wonders if he shouldn't become a "super detective or a crime fighter." Instead, he meets a tragic end.

But Wylie's concept may not have been entirely free of influences either. Way back in 1902-03, an obscure newspaper strip by J. Koerner called "Hugo Hercules" featured a man possessing superstrength and superspeed only a little less incredible than Hugo Danner's powers. During the strip's brief run, Hugo lifted a fire engine, outraced a streetcar, and once kicked a whole house into the air.

But the roots of Superman are many. Others have likened the Man of Steel to Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter of Mars in reverse. Carter's leaping and fighting abilities came from Mars' lighter gravity. And a 1929 story by Jack Williamson and Miles J. Breur called "The Girl from Mars" is virtually a blueprint for Superman's origins. An infant girl is rocketed from the doomed planet Mars to Earth, where she grows up to display super powers of her own. This story was published by another Hugo—pioneer SF publisher Hugo Gernsback.

The roots of Superman are many, and coincidental parallelism can't always be ruled out. But there's one clue that has gone unnoticed all these years: The early Man of Steel wore, not boots, but high-strapped leather sandals. In other words, *gladiator* sandals.

If there is a more perfect acknowledgment of Superman's ultimate roots, I can't imagine it.

FRENCHMAN OF STEEL!

Continued from page 35

of "Italian-format" comics (horizontal, or landscape format) as early as mid-1939. The writer for these original episodes was V. Baggioli and the artist signed his work "Zenba." It is difficult to know exactly how many of these were produced, but five were used by S.A.G.E.; two as a replacement for the real Superman/Yordi in the periodical *Aventures* and three published in their original size and form (18-page, 27.5cm by 18.5cm comics with color front cover and b&w interiors.) These last three were part of a series called *Les Dessins Animés*, and were numbered accordingly. These three are:

"Le Géant de pierre" (The Stone Giant)—*Les Dessins Animés* #8 (January 18, 1940?). Yordi confronts a sect whose members are clad in KKK-like garb and worship a stone idol. Written by Baggioli and drawn by Zenba, this is the oldest Superman "récit complet" in France. It originally appeared in Italy on October 15, 1939, following close on the heels of Superman #1.

"La Torpille humaine" (The Human Torpedo)—*Les Dessins Animés* #9 (March 1940?): Yordi foils a maritime company manager's plans to sabotage his competitor's ships. Written by Baggioli; art by Zenba.

"L'Aviateur solitaire" (The Lonely Aviator)—*Les Dessins Animés* #12 (June 7, 1940): while flying a solitary race, an aviator is shot down over the North Pole. Coming to the rescue, Yordi discovers that the person behind this attack is a corrupt banker. Written by Baggioli; art by Zenba.

(Note: It could be that the missing *Dessins Animés* #10 and 11 were meant to contain the Cyclone stories used in *Aventures* in early 1940.)

S.E.P.I. "Récits Complets"

When S.A.G.E. relinquished the Superman rights to S.E.P.I. in December 1940, the publisher decided to reissue its "récits complets" the strips which had previously run in *Aventures*. S.E.P.I.'s foremost title was *Les Aventuriers d'Aujourd'hui* ("today's adventurers"), a collection which started in 1937 and lasted for more than 100 issues. The series translated such strips as Clarence Gray's Brick Bradford, Frank Godwin's Connie, Zane Grey & Allen Dean's King of the Royal Mounted, Alfred Andriola's Charlie Chan; and Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster's Superman.

Two Superman comics (16-page, 32cm by 24.5cm with color front covers and b&w interiors) were published in this collection. They reprinted the American daily strips, but in these stories Superman went by the name of "L'Homme d'acier" (The Man of Steel), while Clark Kent was renamed Dan Garett (the Blue Beetle's alter ego, which further reinforces the bond between these two super-heroes in France). These two comics are:

"L'Evadé de Krypton" (The Refugee from Krypton)—*Les Aventuriers d'Aujourd'hui* #94 (October 17, 1941). Painted cover by René Brantonne. The storyline covered goes from Superman's origins to the rehabilitation of ex-boxer Larry Trent (*Action Comics* #1 and *Superman* #2).

"L'Audacieux détective" (The Daring Detective)—*Les Aventuriers d'Aujourd'hui* #98 (November 14, 1941). Cover by Polder. The storyline covered goes from Nat Grayson's building sabotages to war in Boravia (Superman #2).

The five "récits complets" mentioned above featuring Superman do not sell for very high prices (about $100 each), but to find them all requires a lot of patience and a good deal of luck. Their respectable age, the troubled times in which they were printed and not too well protected, the fragility of their paper, their low print runs… all these factors truly make them the "Fab Five" of the Golden Age of superheroes in France.

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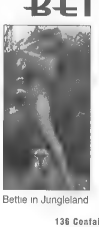

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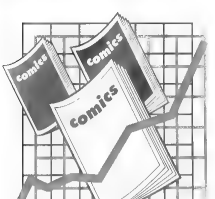

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Super-Sales at the Super-Con!

What do you get when you combine 45,000 fanatic buyers, 250,000 square feet of dealers' room, and over 650 exhibitors? You have the Greatest Comic Book Show On Earth! This year's Comic Con International:San Diego will be remembered as being one of the strongest shows for buyers and sellers in recent history. While the reported sales of the more expensive books were limited (above $2,500), the stampede of buyers looking for comic books and related collectibles in the less than $1,200 range (especially pre 1962, VF or better) reminded me of the Oklahoma Land Rush!

As an aside, major kudos are due to Beth Holley, Vice President of Exhibits, and her crew of volunteers for their tireless efforts to make this show successful not only for exhibitors, but making it a comfortable buying experience for both veteran and new attendees. This year's noteworthy improvement was the Golden Age and Silver Age Pavilion, where one could easily find the dealers who specialized in vintage comics. Maybe next year we'll see a pavilion grouping original art and/or toy dealers... what do you say Beth?

While touring the hall it was evident that those dealers who specialized in selling specific merchandise (be it comics, cards, toys, movie posters or T-shirts) were at a distinct advantage if they were able to focus their booth display on the one major genre they desired to sell. The average collector who walks by a booth and sees a hodge-podge of wares piled up in every available space will no

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

Market Bounces Back at San Diego

San Diego held many surprises, most of them quite pleasant. Attendance numbers were up on the first day. Prices were strong and steep for most material, with little or no discounting to be found. Pre-Code horror, Good Girl, and oddball Golden Age was in great demand. The Pulp market is also enjoying a great deal of attention from comic collectors, with prices climbing. The Original Art market is garnering more interest lately, with plenty of pages to pick from. Frazetta is always popular, but this year his finished drawings, sketches, and oils were in huge demand and commanding very healthy prices. Also, the demand for his Famous Funnies covers and Weird Science-Fantasy #29 was up significantly.

Silver Age original art was at a premium, especially any DC art by Murphy Anderson, Gil Kane, Joe Kubert, Russ Heath, Alex Toth, and Carmine Infantino. (All of the following confirmed sales prices are from the 1998 SD convention.)

Golden Age

If you wanted Timely or DC books in lesser condition, they were everywhere... with most over graded and then marked at 20% of condition Guide. Standard-Nedor books were asked for, but few were available and those that were still priced well above Guide. There were a few outstanding early Fox issues, but again, at asking prices over Guide. Centaur keys were in demand, but not many were to be found.

Action #7 GD $1,200; All Select #1 GD $1,100; Captain Marvel #1nn aFN $3,200; Detective #92 aFN $980, #100 VF $1,000; Flash #1 FR $2,400, #31 NM $850; Georgie #1 NM $350; Green Lantern #2 (GA) VF/VF+ $1,100; Holiday #1 VF $1,500; Joker #1 GD $275; Marvel Family #1 FN $480; Miss Fury #1 aVF $1,1250; Mystery Men #1 VG $1,700; National #4 FN/VF $700; Rangers #1 FN $750; and Science #2 aVF $680.

Atom Age

Pre-Code horror and Good Girl collectors were out in force and paying well above Guide prices for covers and interior art featuring classic (and grisley) exploding heads, injury to the eye panels, bondage, torture, lingerie panels, and gorgeous women. Finding these books in high grade was difficult, but it didn't seem to matter to most collectors and they excitedly purchased most everything in sight, regardless of condition.

Crime & Punishment #3 FN/VF $135; Crime Reporter #3 VF $550; Fight #31 GD/VG $175; Informer #1 FN $55; Murder Incorporated #2 VG $85; Out of the Night #1 FN $195; Phantom Lady #23 GD/GD+ $415; Phantom Witch Doctor #1 FN/VF $220; Popular Teen-Agers #18 NM $200; Secret Life #25 VF $160; Super Mystery V5#3 VF $280; Suspense Detective #1 FN $175; Teen-Age Romances #13 VF $380; Terrifying Tales #12 FN $170; and War Time Romances #4 GD $70.

Silver Age

If you wanted a Silver book, especially a key issue, it was at San Diego. Since it came down to price, collectors had their work cut out for them negotiating the best deal. Even with the abundance of issues, prices were high... and amazingly few dealers seemed willing to do much negotiating. Most held firm and collectors often walked away without anything. It must have disappointing to want say... an Avengers #4 in VF... and have plenty to pick from... but then discover that all the decent copies were priced over Guide and have to walk away without even a 5% discount. Two dealers told me that Marvel Silver Age was selling very well for them, while others reported slower than normal sales.

Adventures of the Fly #1 FN $150; Amazing Adult Fantasy #8 VF $275; Amazing Spider-Man #1 GD $700, #2 VF $800, #50 VF/NM $325; Avengers #1 GD $135; Captain *Continued on page 72*

doubt keep walking past the booth because they cannot focus on what they are looking for. At a show of this immense scope, the veteran collector "trains" his eyes and brain to scan a booth looking for the particular logo or color identification signal when looking for his quarry. If a dealer's booth is a disorganized jumble of commodities Mr. Brain sez "Keep on Movin', there's probably nothing here!" Those dealer's who did this, as well as arranged their booth in an organized and accessible way were doing land office business!

Bud Plant Comic Art has been a fixture at the show for many years. His huge selection of books covering the width and breadth of the comic art scene (plus his great assortment of CBM back issues) is a must-see for any Con attendee.

A pleasant addition to this year's exhibitors' room was the inclusion of booksellers specializing in sci-fi, collectible children's books, television, movie and first editions. Grouping them together in one aisleway was another great opportunity for "one-stop" shopping. Whether you were looking for Disney, Dr. Seuss, Big Little Books or Little Golden Books… these vendors had it all!

Pre-registration statistics for next year's show indicate that these booksellers (and a few more) will be back again in full force! Most evident in their robust buying habits were the non grade-conscious collectors who were interested in filling in their runs of virtually every title that is published!

Jamie Newbold owner of Southern California Comics & Collectibles recaved that this year's show harkened back to a time in the '70s when the economy was also very strong, which in turn, translated to an aggressive wild purchasing behavior displayed by comic collectors who actually read their books! Jamie recounted, "People were buying books like mad! All grades, all titles, even my Lev Gleasons, which had been sitting around for years, sold at this show.

Also, the Western genre went like hotcakes, not only to the traditional older buyers (ages 50 years and up) but to the younger age groups as well. Because we live here in San Diego, we were able to restock the $1-$5 boxes after the show closed at night… we went through nearly 25 long boxes by the end of Thursday, and had to get 10 more long boxes of material before Friday ended. In addition, all of the X-titles and their mutant off-spring (current books included) sold like there was no tomorrow! Most surprising was the demand for Kamandi, Marvel Team-Up & Avengers… all types, any grade!" All genres of books were being heavily sought after, maybe none more so than the Horror, Good Girl and Crime books of the late Golden Age and Pre Code era.

Ken Danker of Monster Collectibles, a specialist in the aforementioned books, reported that he had multiple requests for those hard to find issues that rated in scarcity index of "9 or 10" in Ernie Gerber's Photo Journal Guide. His buyers were ready, willing, and able to pay multiples of "Grade for Guide" for these esoteric items. Reported sales included: Authentic Police Cases #6 (Mile High) $1,600; Blue Beetle #54 VG/FN (2X Guide); Captain Flight #5 VG $225 (3X Guide); Champion #8 GD+ $325 (3X Guide); Crime Reporter #3 VG $225 (Baker-c, Tuska art 4X Guide); Dark Mysteries #19 GD $125 (4.8X Guide); Eerie (Avon) #1 VG- $525, Funny Pages #6 AppVF (restored) $550, Phantom Lady #17 VG- $1,400 (1.6X Guide); Punch #12 GD- $600 (7X Guide); Punch #12 VG- $1150 (7X Guide); Punch #9 FR $75 (1.5X GD price!), Startling Terror Tales #11 (LB Cole - c-black version) VG/FN $425; Weird Mysteries #5 GD+ $425 (3.5X Guide), Weird Tales of the Future #7 VG/FN $350 (2.5X Guide).

Richard Evans of Bedrock City reported his sales of Golden Age and Silver Age were up remarkably from last year's show. Sales included: Batman #62 VF/NM $750, Ibis #6 NM $320; Our Flag #1 FN/VF $500, a group of 38 books including Superman, Superboy, and Action comics for $6,000 which included issues spanning the Golden Age through the Silver Age; Superman #1 (restored) for $25,000 in trade for 20 GA books; 11 pages of original art from The Adventures of Jerry Lewis #113 $25 per page.

Scott McAdam of Treasures of Youth reported sales of: Action #18 FR/GD $120, Amazing Spider-Man #2 VG+ $450; #3 VG+/F- $350; Conan #1 VF+ $150; Mickey Mouse Magazine V5 #11 VG $100; Red Ryder #3 GD- $70, Rangers #13 FN+, #35 FN/VF and Planet #35 VG all for $290; X-Men #1 GD $250.

Ron Pussell of Redbeard's Book Den and veteran comic-con attendee reported that the following books were sold from his personal collection: Crime Mysteries #15 (High Sierra copy) NM $500; Fight Against Crime #6 (High Sierra copy) VFN/NM $120, Pep #3 (Larson copy) NM $1,500; Racket Squad In Action #14 (Mile High) NM $300; Strange Suspense Stories #22 (High Sierra copy) NM $400; Tales from the Crypt #31 (Gaines copy) NM+ $1,125, Thing #7 (High Sierra copy) VFN/NM $950, Weird Fantasy #19 (Gaines copy) NM/MT $640, Weird Fantasy#20 (Gaines copy) NM/MT $685; Weird Mysteries #2 (High Sierra copy) Abt VFN $950.

Big Ticket Sales (various dealers). Action 1# AppFN/VF- (restored) $57,000, Adventure #51 VF/VF+ $2,700; All American #16 VG $14,000 (sold by Mike Goldman & Vinny Zurzolo); All New #1 VF $2,800 (cash & trade); Brave & Bold #28 VF $1,900, Batman #31 AppVG (restored) $6,500, Batman #1 Fair $6,000; Marvel #1 AppVF (October cover date, restored) $29,000, Marvel Mystery #24 VF/NM $2,600 (2X NM guide), Marvel Mystery #25 VF/NM $2,600 (2X NM guide), Superman #32 FN/VF w/spine split $5,250, Superman #53 NM- $4,000, Tales of Suspense #39 VF+ $2,700; Weird Science Fantasy Annual #1 NM $2,000 (1.4X Guide); X-Men #1 VF/NM $8,000 (1.45 times Guide).

Golden Age Sales (various dealers): Aces High #1 (Gaines #5) $350; Aces High #2 (Gaines #5) $200; Action #100 VG $2,700, #29 FN $600; #37 GD $190, #85 VG/VF+ Dble Cvr $450, All Star #34 App. VG/FN (repaired) $200; Archie #3 VG $400, Batman #25 FN- $450; Batman #47 VG $575; #47 VG/FN $750; Batman#60 FN $225; Battle #1 VF+ $225; Boy Comics #17 VF $250; Captain America #7 VF+ $4,000; Captain America #13 FN/VF $1,500; Captain America #59 FN $650; Captain America #77 FN+ $ 500; Captain Marvel Jr. #43 VF/NM (Mile High) $253; A large stack of Comic Cavalcade ranging from GD to FN most numbers from 31-63 $3,100; Exciting #59 VF/NM $375; Fantastic Worlds #7 VF/NM (Spokane Copy) $125; Flame, The #2 VG/FN $250, Flash #94 VG/FN $400; Four Color #62 Donald Duck in "Frozen Gold" FN+ $525; A large stack of Fox & Crow ranging from GD to VG most numbers from 3-49 $2,800.

Heroic #8 VF/NM (Mile High) $375, Hit #5 App VF (restored) $1,500 (cash & trade), Human Torch #10 VF $1,500; Human Torch #28 FN $275; Human Torch #30 VG/FN $215, Intimate Love #22 VF/NM $30; #21 VF/NM $30; Man Hunt #6 VF $145; Marvel Mystery #46 App. VG/FN (repaired) $260; Marvel Mystery #47 NM-/NM $1425; Marvel Mystery #64 (Cosmic Aeroplane) $1,200 (1.5 NM Guide); Marvel Mystery #85 VG/FN $250; Master #16 NM- (Allentown) $1,300, Master #62 (Mile High) VF/NM $375, Menace #2 VF/NM (White Mtn).$450; # 4 VF/NM (White Mtn) $285; #6 VF/NM (White Mtn) *(Continued on page 72)*

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SCHIFFMAN CONTINUED

America #117 NM $40; Detective #233 VF $550 80 PG Giant #7 VF/NM $220; Incredible Hulk #1 GD $700; Showcase #4 aFN $1700; Tales of Suspense #9 FN $140, #52 NM $130; Thor #126 VF+ $80.

Bronze Age

1970's books were the talk of the convention. At least one early Bronze Age book went through the hands of four dealers before the Con even opened! The price of a DC Super Special #5-17 in NM quietly inflated from $75 to $395 before Sunday morning. There was a lot of interest in the 1970's keys and NM non-key issues priced fairly (ie at or just above Guide). There was also a strong trend interest in scarce titles, even if they are non-mainstream characters. Asking prices were all over the board, with many asking ridiculous multiples for books in VF or lesser condition. The most asked-for books were the 48/52 page DCs in high grade, especially the more obscure titles.

DC Special Series #1 NM $18; DC Special #2 VF $42; DC 100 pg Super Spectacular #4 NM $150; Detective #400 VF/NM $80; Harvey #1 NM $80; Homer the Happy Ghost #3 NM $40; Laurel and Hardy #1 NM $70; Li'l Kids #1 VG $14; Marvel Spotlight #3 VF/NM $30, #4 NM $20; Mystery in Space #111 NM $12; Our Army at War #242 VF $14; Tomahawk #137 NM $20; Tom & Jerry #1 FN $28. Mysteries #6 VF+ $620; Weird Science #12 NM (Mile High) $630; Wonder Woman #2 VG $500; World's Finest #9 FN+ $550; #71 VG+ $350.

Silver Age Sales (various dealers): All Star Western #10 VF $175, #10 VF+ $150, Amazing Spider-Man #2 VF $2,400, #13 VF/NM $750, #110 NM/NM+ (Oakland) $40; Avengers #57 NM-/NM (Oakland) $115; Brave & Bold #1 VF $1,200; Captain America #100 NM+ (Oakland Copy) $425, #195 NM (Oakland) $25; Detective #395 NM- NM (Oakland), N. Adams $45, Fantastic Four #1 App VF+ (restored) $3,100, #4 FN+ $700, #46 (Green River) NM+ $200 (3 times Guide), #50 VF/NM $230, #52 NM $150, Flash #109 GD $24; #113 FN $100, #198 NM- (Oakland) $115; Green Lantern #5 NM $535; Ghost Story #1 NM (White Mtn) $100; GI Combat #138 NM (Oakland), intro of "loser" $150; Hot Stuff Sizzlers #1 NM $90.

Iron Man #1 NM-/NM (Oakland Copy) $533; Kid Colt #159 NM- (Oakland) $15, Marvel Super Villains #1 NM $5; Our Army at War #91 NM- $675; Patsy Walker Annual #1 NM $100; Showcase #53 FN $21.50; Strange Adventures #121 VF $50; Strange Suspense Stories (Charlton) #18 VF $400, Strange Tales #110 VF $400; Superboy #158 NM (Oakland) $35, Superman #229 MT (Oakland) $60; Tales of Suspense #38 NM- $320; Tales to Astonish #52 (VF/NM White Mtn.) $247; Thor #155 NM (Oakland) $50; Time Tunnel #2 VF/NM $40; X-Men #1 VF- $1,850, #1 GD $350; #11 NM- $225; X-Men Giant Size #1 NM $500

Bronze Age Sales (various dealers): Amazing Adventures #11 (1st Beast) $125; Amazing World of Comics #15 (Wonder Woman) VF $75; Batman #234 NM (Oakland) $200; Batlash #1 NM $14; #1 NM (Oakland) $25; #2 NM $9; #3 NM $9, Conan #1 NM (Oakland) $280; DC Special Series #16 (Death of J. Hex) NM $25; Fear #1 NM (Oakland) $50; Green Lantern #76 NM- (Oakland), N. Adams $500; House of Mystery #195 NM+ (Oakland), Wrightson $49; Hulk #150 NM+ (Oakland) $10; Lois Lane #195 NM (Oakland) $10; My Love #1 NM- (Oakland) $100; Our Love Story #16 NM (Oakland) $48; Outlaw Kid #8 NM- (Oakland) $20; Plop #1 NM $5; Rawhide Kid #100 NM (Oakland) $20; Secret Hearts #141 NM- (Oakland) $50, Strange Adventures #224 NM- (Oakland) $25; Two Gun Kid #105 NM (Oakland) $10; Witching Hour #2 NM+ (Oakland) $60.

Original Art: Adam Hughes B&W pinup of "Redwing" from Teen Titans $400; Al Williamson "Secret Agent Corrigan" daily $100; Anderson/Sekowsky cover to JLA #53 $8,000 (cash & trade), Defenders #18 cover $200; Frazetta drawing from "Fire & Ice" $7,500, Frazetta nude female (left-handed sketch) $3,000; Frazetta painting "The Rider" $65,000; Godzilla #21-cover $300, John Byrne Fantastic Four #257 interior page #65; Extremely rare Lou Fine artwork from Crack #17 Black Condor (no story title) page #2 for $1,300, page #4 $3,000, page #5 for $3,500 page #6 $3,000; page #8 $2,000, Marshall Rogers Mr. Miracle #22 interior page $100; Murphy Anderson Planet Comics #1 re-creation $5,000, Trimpe & Milgrom-Shogun Warriors covers #4,5,7,8,9,15,16,17,19 all at $100 each, Winsor McKay political cartoon (1910-1919?) 12" x 22" $1,700

Toys: A general overview of the showroom indicated that a glut of Star Wars merchandise translated into a major slowdown which resulted in discounted prices for many of the older items. With the new merchandise readily available many collectors were saying "The old stuff will be there, I want the new stuff before it's gone!"

Anything Wonder Woman wouldn't stay on the shelves be it sunglasses, shoe strings, or Super Power figures. Transformers are very difficult to keep in stock as the kids who grew up on these are now entering their "earning years" and wish to recapture their youth

Sales included: Big Frankie (Aurora) $550 painted professionally, unpainted $400 ; Blue Beetle Tattoos in envelope (Fox premium-1943-44?) $100; Constructicons (Transformers) complete, no box $65, Donald Duck Living Toy Ring (1949) (complete w/box & instructions) $675; Flintstone (Dakin-1970s) set of six (no box) $175; Pebbles 15" doll early (1960s) (no box) $30; Superman calendar (1948) $1,500; Superman of America 6 inch Action Comics patch (1940) $6,300; Thing Maker boxed (1964) $60.

And finally, Joe & Nadia Mannarino of All-Star Auctions reported the following from their inaugural auction on Sep 12, 1998. Comics—Action #1 appFN+ $34,100; Submariner #10 NM (San Francisco) $6,000; Police #64,75,83 and Plastic Man #34 (all Mile High) $1,600 the set; Original Art - FF #74 VF orig cover art 1967 Jack Kirby $20,200; Little Nemo Sunday Page 1907 FN $16,500; Floyd Gottfredson water color "Mickey Mouse adv w/Robin Hood" 1980 $14,300.

JOHN CANFIELD

I sold: Li'L Kids #3 FN $20 and #4 FN $20; Detective #359 (1st Batgirl) FN $50; Marvel Spotlight #2 (1st Werewolf by Night) FN $16.50; Marvel Team-Up #1 FN $17.50, Ch Ii #3 FN $5; Our Love Story #5 VF $14.50. Now for reports from other online dealers

Tom Raski - Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love #1 VG $15, Devilina #1 (Skywald Magazine) VF $13, Emergency (comic) #2 F $26, #4 F $31, Emergency (mag) #1 F $41, Heart Throbs #137 (52 pages) VF $15, Lois Lane #105 (1st Rose and Thorn) F $10, Sgt. Rock #302 NM $15, Superman #233 F $11, Unknown Soldier #205 NM $10, Weird War #8 VF $10, Wonder Woman #179 F $20 and #200 (52 pages) NM $60, Young Love #111 (100 pgs) VF $26, & Young Romance #200 (100 pgs) VF $42.

Jim Lowery - Batman #207 NM $30, DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #5 FN $345, Neal Adams Index VF $75, Spider-Man #100 NM, $195 Superman #202 NM $65, The Hunger Dogs (Graphic Novel by Kirby) NM $59.50 Jim also sold a set of DC Superhero stickers (the ones advertised in all of the early '70's DC books) for $66.25!

Stuart DeGraff - Adventure Comics #390 VF $36, #416 VF $45 and VF+ $67, Wonder Woman #199 VF $61, Detective Comics #416 NM $43, #417 NM 40, #422 NM 40, Rudolph Treasury C-20 VG $75, Justice League of America #113 NM $31, Supergirl #1 NM $25, Rip Hunter #20 VF (White Mountain) $101, Batman #203 NM Giant $36, Batman #212 NM $31, America's Greatest #4 (Mile High) VF $1050, Laugh #166 (Beatles app) FN $45, Batman #222 (Beatles app.) FN $32

Dan Cusimano - Wonder Woman #185 VF $18 50, #197 NM $16 50, #203 NM $20 50, #208 NM $26, #209 NM $31; Batman #233 NM $17.50.

Mark McDaniel - Super DC Giant S-17 NM $237, Super DC Giant S-22 F $5, DC Special #1 VF $22.50, DC Special #2 VF $18.50, DC Special #3 NM $33, Supernatural Thrillers #1 NM $51 and $20.50, Shadow #1 NM $10, Supergirl #1 VF $15.25, Beware #1 NM $36 and $11, Weird Worlds #1 VF $5, Shazam #1 NM $4.25, Kamandi #1 VF $15.50, Swamp Thing #1 VF $25, DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #21 VF $7.50, Vault of Evil #1 NM $15.50, War is Hell #1 NM $31 and $13, JIM #1 F $8, Crypt of Shadows #1 NM $29 and $13, SHIELD #1 VF $4.75 and $8, Worlds Unknown #1 NM $20.50 and $12.50.

Superman from Hong Kong

"Since our family avidly collected DC comics, I always kept a lookout for anything comic book-related. When I traveled for the government, I would often visit different cities and would usually make time for a side trip to local comic shops and/or other collectors in my off time.

In the early '70s, I traveled to Hong Kong for the US Navy. Upon my arrival I happened to pass a Chinese newsstand. Much to my surprise, copies of the latest *Superman* issues caught my eye hanging from clothes pins... Copies of *Superman* in Chinese! Each one had a note in the indicia that read 'Superman (Chinese Edition).'

But the most interesting Superman artifact at the newsstand was a color cardboard button (pinback) that was given away as a premium if you purchased all ten issues.

To this day, I still get a kick out of showing fellow collectors *Superman* #1-10... in Chinese... and the pinback. After more than 25 years... I still hold these little-known *Superman* issues in great affection."

—NICK CARTER (GARY & LANE'S DAD)

We'd like you to write for us!

Contact the CBM Editorial Department 619•437•1996

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 9

have discovered is known in the Overstreet Price Guide as Tim McCoy, Police Car 17 No. 674, 1934 (32 pgs., 11" x 14 ¾", B&W, like Feature Books) Whitman Publishing Co. 674-1933 movie ill. Listed at $23, $69, and $185… tucked away in the middle of page 781

My copy which I have owned for 20 years measures 11" x 15" exactly, just an inch taller than New Fun #1. It has a couple firsts to its credit. Not only is it the "first" Whitman comic book, clearly dated 1934, and is all original material created especially for this comic book, it also is the very first "movie adaptation" comic book. It clearly states on the cover "Action Story Adapted From the Movie Tim McCoy Police Car 17—A Columbia Picture"

Tim McCoy's art is of the quality one finds in the Humor comic books from the previous year. The cover is very colorful. It reads well and looks like it was done as an attempt to be published as a newspaper comic strip. For all I presently know it may have appeared in some newspapers.

One thing for sure, if there ever was a "sleeper" out there waiting to be tripped over, Tim McCoy Police Car 17 is high on the list.

Robert Beerbohm, Nebraska

The nerve to call

Truly enjoyed CBM #59 as Kurt Schaffenberger is a personal favorite artist of mine. Allow me the opportunity to tell you a short story about my one meeting with him:

In 1980 I was fourteen years old and about two years into my comic book collecting addiction. DC had just published The New Adventures of Superboy #1, which I had procured at the local variety store. Much to my surprise, that next week the local New Jersey Sunday paper (The Bergen County Record) had a feature article profiling a local talent, comic book artist Kurt Schaffenberger. I recognized Mr. Schaffenberger's name as the artist on The New Adventures of Superboy, as well as copies of Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane and Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen, which I had in my collection. After asking my parents if it was appropriate, I went to the local phone book, looked up Mr. Schaffenberger's telephone number and worked up the nerve to call.

Mr. Schaffenberger was extremely complimentary of my "tracking him down" after seeing the newspaper profile and agreed to have a friend of mine and I visit with him at his home. My friend and I proceeded to rummage through our collection for comics with Schaffenberger art in preparation of the meeting.

I still carry with me some wonderful memories of that day at the Schaffenberger residence. The most vivid of which are of his kind hospitality, accompanied by cookies and lemonade. Mr. Schaffenberger was incredibly generous with his time, showing us his in-home studio and some original art pages. This was like nirvana to two fledgling collectors. He also signed the handful of comics we had brought, copies which reside in my personal collection to this day.

Should you read this letter Mr. Schaffenberger, thank you so very much for that day and the memories I still carry with me. And if you ever find yourself in Colorado, it would be my pleasure to return the hospitality. Very truly yours.

Ron Kahan, Colorado

Say it ain't so

A brief (but panicked) response to Alan Glick's letter in CBM #61 concerning the rumor that Ernie Gerber's DC Photo-Journal Guides won't be published: SOMEBODY PLEASE TELL ME THIS ISN'T TRUE! Somebody (Gemstone perhaps?) needs to publish these books. It's not just that I've been waiting for these for what seems like forever, but Gerber's series is essential to the hobby as a whole. I'm sure he has explored every option, but in addition to finding a willing publisher, maybe taking advance orders or raising the price would help. I'd be willing to pay an extra few dollars to help perpetuate such an important (not to mention cool) series.

Robb McAllister, Wisconsin

My only complaint

Just a quick note to say that I really enjoy CBM and look forward to each issue. My only complaint is that each issue causes me to broaden my collecting interests. If only my discretionary income were so easily increased!

On another note, I was wondering if your readers might happen to know the title and issue number of a DC comic from the early to mid sixties that featured a story about a man who drives over a bridge in some fog and enters his hometown that is now populated with exact robot copies of the townspeople? When I was young a friend of mine had hundreds of coverless DCs that we read constantly and I have always remembered this particular one for some strange reason.

Keep up the good work.

John Malone, via E-Mail

Gothic Tales of Love

The 1998 San Diego Con was nothing short of fantastic. Being my first time down to the Con I enjoyed having the opportunity to meet you as well as other well-known dealers and collectors. While scouting around the dealers' room I was able to pick up a complete run of The Three Mousketeers (2nd series, 1970) by DC. Talk about obscure titles, try and find these books! I also came across a Marvel magazine romance title from the Bronze Age called "Gothic Tales of Love" which came out in 1975. I picked up issues #1 and 2 but don't know if any other issues were published (maybe CBM readers will know). This Marvel magazine title is not listed in the annual Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide. I also enjoyed reading the San Diego Con special edition of CBM #62 and I hope to see you next year at the next San Diego Con. Keep up the good work!

Bill Alexander, California

Addicted to CBM!

I am addicted to CBM! The lawn goes unmowed and the chores pile up as I pour over each new issue! But I really need an index! When I find books that I know I've read about, I spend too much time going over issues to find which one covers the one I'm looking for (and I usually find several other articles to re-read). Keep up the amazing work.

Carl Weed, New York

Let's have a standard

Noted with interest the continuing controversy surrounding restoration/conservation. One aspect of this dilemma which has never to my knowledge been addressed is the quality of workmanship of the most visible people practicing this craft, of which there seem to under a dozen.

I recently received a book which had been restored by someone who has advertised rates of $55 per hour. The cover had been strengthened by floating it in a solution of sizing (a normal practice). Too much size had been added to the bath resulting in a cover which now feels abnormally thick. The book looks great in its mylar sleeve, but the book's intrinsic comic book "cheapness" has been totally lost.

Has this person done a good job? For my money I think definitely not! So my request for CBM… if we rate comic books from poor to NM, why not rate comic book restorers? I think a series of articles visiting each conservator, noting their procedures, philosophies, and most of all results would be beneficial, not only for the collector but for the preservation of the books. Restoration done properly can add decades to the life of a book. A simple water washing can renew a book's freshness. Restoration when done poorly can result in a strange hybrid of its former self.

Please, please let's have a standard!

Dan Makara, Connecticut

Mystery credits

Was catching up on my reading with recent issues of CBM and happened to note a letter in issue #60 from fellow Canadian, Paul Wardle, of Toronto, who asks whether Gary Michaels was an inking pseudonym of Johnny Craig, so I thought I'd drop you another line with the answer to his query.

A lot of people besides Gene Colan were secretly working for Marvel and DC (and other companies) at the same time in the '60s and thus were using pen-names, just as Colan was using "Adam Austin." "Gary Michaels," however, was not Johnny Craig; he was Jack Abel. And before anyone asks, the other known Marvel pseudonyms of the period include the following: "Jay Gavin" was Werner Roth; "Mickey Demeo" was Mike Esposito; "Frankie Ray" was Frank Giacoia; "George Bell" was George Roussos; "R. Berns" was Robert Bernstein; "Joe Carter" was Jerry Siegel; "N. Korok" was Don Rico; "H.E. Huntley" was Ernie Hart; "Scott Edwards" was Gil Kane; and "L. P. Gregory" was Gaspar Saladino. I may have missed one or two, but that's most of them.

Speaking of mystery credits, a recent Mark Evanier column put forth his well-researched contention that the unknown inker of Fantastic Four #1 and #2 was George Klein. As Mark notes, the work may not look like Klein, but then Klein's DC work over Curt Swan on Superman doesn't look a lot like his late '60s Marvel work, either. However, he left Marvel for DC right after FF #2, which is exactly when he started inking Swan's Superman. We may never be certain, but this is the best guess I've heard so far.

One mystery that's still unsolved, however, is the identity of the letterer of Incredible Hulk #1. As George Olshevsky noted in his index, the splash page was lettered by Art Simek, but the letterer of the rest of the story is none of the Marvel regulars of the time, including Art Simek, Sam Rosen, Morrie Kuramoto, Terry Szenics, Martin Epp, John Duffy, E. Thomas, Irv Watanabe, or Ray Holloway. Who is it?

Once again this year, I won't be able to get to the San Diego Comic Con (next year for sure!) which means I'll miss out on meeting two of my favorite creators, John Broome and Nick Cardy. I hope somebody takes the opportunity to ask Cardy who penciled Teen Titans #14. This came out soon after Cardy's recently revealed disagreement with DC (around the time he was penciling #1), when he was pondering quitting. My theory is that DC assigned another artist to #14,

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but then Cardy was reinstated and given the assignment of inking the already-completed pencils to make it look more like his work. However, anyone can see that this issue doesn't look like any other in the run. I've heard the suggestion that the penciler was Jay Scott Pike, who mainly drew romance comics for DC, but did occasionally draw some superhero-like stuff, including the Dolphin issue of Showcase and the Enchantress strip in Strange Adventures. I'm really hoping someone brings along a copy and shows it to Nick to refresh his memory and that he recalls who it was that almost replaced him. All for now.

Murray P. Ward, Manitoba, Canada

Good to hear from you, Murray. I really enjoyed your excellent info (above) on creator pseudonyms. (I'm also looking forward to your upcoming Metal Men article, tentatively scheduled for Comic Book Marketplace #64.) The Cardy/Teen Titans #14 mystery continues as no one (that I know of) asked Nick for clarification during the bustle and bustle of the San Diego Comic Book Convention. Perhaps we can prevail upon CBM contributor and Cardy historian, John Coates, to pose the question? Nick may be the only one who can clear up the mystery.

Let's start with Superman

Have really enjoyed the reprints of articles from popular magazines about comics, written in and around the Golden Age. I find them historically interesting and entertaining. I found the one reprinted in CBM #60 still insightful and relevant today. I have worked with youth people for a decade as a counselor.

Upon reading the article "Bad for Kids" from CBM #60. In the article, it discusses that children imagine themselves to be the heroes from stories they read. It doesn't matter how outlandish the character, they want to identify with the winners.

This aspect of hero worship is certainly a part of human nature evolved to insure that successful strategies are retained and the chances of survival of the individual and the species are enhanced. Socially humans have utilized this reality, consciously and unconsciously, to create myths and heroic images to inspire and teach values and behaviors deemed important enough to pass on.

I believe that comic heroes serve this same purpose. There have certainly been times when this was more clearly an intentional process. For example, my father read comics during the early 1940s. Whether fighting the tyranny of the Axis powers, battling saboteurs, or catching common criminals, heroes then were portrayed as virtuous and honest. They always came out on top. Good overcame evil. Not a bad message for young children when considering the overwhelming horrors of that war. Maybe we should consider the times we are in now. It is interesting to note that many of the kids growing up during that time frame seemed to have greater belief in themselves, their country, and humanity, than does "Generation X." Polls have repeatedly indicated that there is no more generally pessimistic and fatalistic segment of our population than our current generation of young people. I am not saying that changes in the way heroes are portrayed in mass media is the sole reason for this, but it can be assumed to be one of many potential reasons.

The article stated that there is no harm in children imagining themselves to be superheroes, and I concur. Sure we reach an age where we know we will never leap tall buildings in a single bound, but just maybe the message of living heroically outlives the images they were given to us in. Should we not all aspire to higher ideals? To explain this further, I must utilize examples.

Let's start with Superman. He is a castaway from another world with no innate investment in us or our problems. He chooses to use his powers for good, instead of ignoring the wrongs done around him. Why? Because good is shown through him to be a universal trait. The idea that good transcends human beings and our earthly existence has been a focus of all religious faith. His is altruism at its finest. Who could argue against "concern for the well-being of others" as a positive trait? Who would not want young people to have hope and a belief in the power of good, no matter how fanciful generated? Superman can be seen as an archetype of the strong and capable helping the unfortunate and weak.

Now consider the Batman. His origins lay in tragedy and loss. Today's society has shown that personal tragedy can be used as a legal defense for one's poor choices and criminal behavior. The Dark Knight however rises from his unhappy beginnings. He is someone who's sorrow and pain we can relate to, because he too is human. Does he wither and die as a result of the unspeakable horrors of his childhood? No way! He uses his loss as a springboard to become the best he can be. Research indicates that many chose to remain lifelong victims of the traumas they have been subjected to, but some (like the Batman) rise like a phoenix from the ashes of their past. Batman is a symbol of the potentially indomitable human spirit.

We can see that both these heroes have messages to offer through their adventures.

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Superman's is to give the best of what you are, and Batman's is to make the best of what you have. Both do so in the true spirit of helping others and opposing the ills of society. Neither utilizes nor justifies torture or murder. Neither tolerates the cruelty of the strong toward the weak. Both are protectors of children, the old, the downtrodden ... the meek. They believe good is not just out there, but that it can prevail. All in all, not bad concepts to present to young people!

In the 1942 article it is stated that these super heroic images give children a sense of security. Imagine if you will that, although the direct identification with the characters may diminish as we grow older, the morals and the beliefs represented do not. Wouldn't that sense of security be comforting into adulthood? I think it is. For myself, I know it's part of why I still love and collect comics. Maybe we know that the super heroics are fantasy, but we should never forget the heroic ideals are not. In many ways, we may be called to our heroic selves daily. We certainly have opportunities to be kind and helpful. Edmund Burke stated: "The only thing needed for evil to triumph, is for good men to do nothing." We may not leap tall buildings, but we can make a difference. Underneath it all, isn't that what being a hero is all about?

Media in any form does not make or break an individual's personality. However, no one can deny that there is influence and interplay between media and belief systems. Not just for our kids, but for grown-ups as well.

Greg Westphal, Arizona

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Sticker/no grade pricing?

Congratulations to your fine staff and yourself for an excellently orchestrated production of CBM #61. The variety and quality of feature articles in this Stan Lee/Marvel bullpen issue was a pleasure to behold. And imagine my surprise to have found so many recurrent references to my favorite, Strange Tales, both in print as well as in the photo section of the magazine.

I am writing in response to the interesting comments made by Stephen Gentner in CBM Forum, particularly in regard to his "Subjective—Adjective" grade scale as well as the issue of "Sticker/no grade pricing" at comic conventions. First, let me say that I was glad to have shared CBM Forum with Stephen this month, and I believe it is a good idea to feature two contributors each month instead of just one. Over time, we get to hear more collector viewpoints. You might consider this for future issues.

I was glad to see Stephen's 20 gradations scale presented in linear sequence and diagram form at the bottom of his column. Documentation of such a scale diagram in the literature is long overdue, particularly with its incorporation of traditional grade categories along with the so-called combination or split grades such as VG/FN and VF/NM. At a conceptual as well as a practical level, Stephen's diagram helps us collectors to organize our thoughts from a visual perspective, and to perhaps agree upon where to place (sequentially) those ubiquitous plus and minus signs as well as the "half-grades" which "everyone" seems to use.

For the most part, I agree with Stephen's ordering of the grade categories into a "workable context." Except for his exclusion of a Poor category, and his inclusion of a FR/GD combination grade, I found Stephen's scale diagram to have been conceptually consistent with the categories previously described in narrative form in my grading manual. At least at a theoretical level I would suggest inclusion of a Poor category on such a scale. I don't believe it's necessary to designate a combination grade for FR/GD, although admittedly, I once used such a critter upon an unfortunate copy of a G.I. Combat issue.

Stephen sure knows how to turn a colorful phrase: "Sticker/no grade pricing." I dig it. Let's give him credit for coining a new phrase for this ubiquitous practice at comic conventions. The label has a nice ring to it. And as soon as I came across it in print, I knew immediately what he was talking about. Very often at Houston collector shows, dealers have a price sticker on the book without a notation. *(Continued on page 79)*

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of grade. At least initially, this leaves a "gray area" between what the potential buyer might grade the book upon casual inspection and how the dealer might have viewed the book's condition in the formulation of his or her price (sticker). Subsequently, a coy discussion often ensues in which the dealer is gradually "led" by the potential buyer (to use Richard Evans' term for it) to justify the sticker price base upon grade considerations. Experienced dealers can spot this coming "a mile away," and resent it. And justifiably so.

Though I appreciate Stephen's concern when he states that: "This disconnection between grade and price is disconcerting," there's really more to it than just an apparent, one-to-one relationship between grade and price. Richard Evans recently made a very relevant commentary on this issue in the context of today's comic marketplace. Richard basically proposes that price is not a function of grade [necessarily]. Price is a function of several factors of which grade is only one consideration. Another factor is the desirability and demand for one particular issue in a run as opposed to the other issues around it (as listed in the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide). Consider Richard's example of the run of Amazing Spider-Man issues #31-38; all priced uniformly at $45 in Fine grade condition. He suggests that issue #s 31-33 in the run represent an important and desirable sequence (of three issues) which could well be broken out from the other issues around it and listed separately in the Guide. As such, a uniform price of $45 may not represent the true desirability for a pretty Fine copy of say, issue #33 (a favorite of Steve Ditko fans and many collectors in general) as opposed to the lesser demand on popularity for a copy of issue #35 in similar grade.

To elaborate many such coveted issues are perhaps worth more in Fine grade (as well as Very Fine grade also) than the uniform ratio percentage of NM Guide often applied across the board for whole sets of blocks of issues. Mark Wilson recently hit the nail on the head exactly (in his mail order catalog market review) when he pointed out that what we really needed with this year's Guide adjustments was "custom" prices on books rather than "uniform ratio" pricing. I interpret this to mean that certain issues should be considered individually and not necessarily priced (uniformly) at the same ratio as surrounding issues listed in the Guide. Mark was talking more about Golden Age and the reductions in that area, but I believe there are applications to the Silver Age books, also. A FN+ copy of Fantastic Four #12 with nice, off-white pages should be worth more percentage-wise of NM Guide than a copy of FF #68 in similar condition. It's just a more important (and coveted) book in the scheme of things and harder to find in accurately graded Fine+ condition. And based upon regional supply and demand factors here in Houston, if I had a solid VF copy of FF #12 with off-white pages which I wanted to sell, I'd easily put a NM price on the book and not even flinch at those passing shoppers who thought I priced my books too high. Because once they circle the showroom floor and fail to find another copy of that particular issue in similar high grade, they might as well reconsider my "overpriced" copy as a true gem worthy of their purchase. If not, I'm glad to hang on to the book and watch it appreciate in value over time. I don't mean to sound smug, but true high grade copies of Silver Age books from the early to mid-sixties are not really common in Houston and thus I value such copies highly and put a premium on them price-wise.

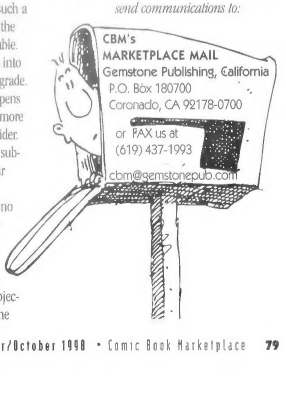
So when a potential buyer approaches a dealer at a convention and quotes Guide price for a VF copy of Amazing Spider-Man #33 (the "classic Ditko issue"), I understand how the dealer can get frustrated if he or she happens to have the book sticker-priced above Guide. Maybe the dealer had to pay more to get such a nice copy and thus has more $ tied up in the book than other issues displayed on the table. This represents another factor which goes into price formulation, in addition to just the grade. And perhaps the dealer, as a collector happens to subjectively value that particular issue more than others. That's another factor to consider. There is such a thing as a sentimental or subjective value which you and I place on our favorite books.

Both Richard Evans and Keith Contarino make another important point I'd like to elaborate upon briefly. An individual ultimately buys a book because of its price and appearance and not due to the particular grade which a seller might subjectively place on it. If the individual likes the book's overall appearance at given price, he or she will buy the book even though they may theoretically disagree with how the seller happened to grade it. The buyer is not really purchasing a book for its grade-as-assigned-by-the-dealer, but rather for how that particular copy appears to them as an individual, and for the price on it. I'll close with this example. My VF-copy of Amazing Spider-Man #13 has a pretty, off-white front cover which is clean and unsoiled, without yellow/tan discoloration in the all-important center portion of the cover. That's a real plus compared to most other copies of that particular issue. I value and price the book at $500, which is considerably over Guide for that grade. But to someone else, such as a potential buyer, the book may appear to be a beautiful VF+ copy and they may well purchase it at $500; even though I (personally) strictly graded it at "only" VF-. It's the appearance and price to the person shelling out the money that matters most.

Many factors can go into the formulation of the price which eventually ends up on the sticker of a book displayed at conventions. Let's remember that before "jumping on" the dealer for an apparent discrepancy between grade and price.

Craig Rader, Texas

My thanks to everyone who wrote in this time. I look forward to hearing comments and suggestions from CBM readers all over the world. Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send communications to:



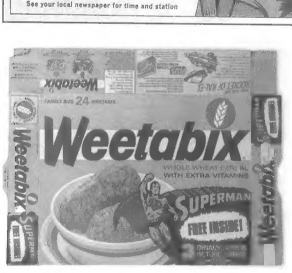
Continued from page 65

Kelloggs became the sponsor of the Superman radio show in 1942... and remained so for the next 15 years. This ad from Superman #24, Sept. 1943, uses Superman as a spokesman for both the cereal and MBS (Mutual Broadcast System.

ingly) a hit, Post released the first set of five premiums (1979-80): Cocoa or Fruity Pebbles Mini-Comic Book, Honey-Comb Iron-On, Super Sugar Crisp Poster, and Alpha-Bits Stickers. All five boxes had a form to order a "free" View-Master Super Heroes reel and Viewer for "only" 9 proof-of-purchase seals. Also, all five boxes carried an entry form to win a Breakfast With The Super Heroes Contest, with the three grand prizes taking the winners to Hollywood for a week and giving them $1000 spending money... PLUS breakfast with your favorite Super Heroes character! If you missed a big one, you could have a chance at 150 second prizes... a bicycle trimmed with Super Heroes decals.

The second set of five Post cereals of the 1980-81 period switched around the inside prizes... now the lineup was:

SUPERMAN
ON THE AIR!
HEY, FELLAS! NOW YOU CAN HEAR MY THRILLING ADVENTURES ON THE RADIO! TUNE IN YOUR MUTUAL STATION, MONDAY THRU FRIDAY!
Kellogg's PEP PRESENTS
New, startling adventures of the man of steel!
Listen to Superman! Hear the terrific crashes as his mighty muscles tear down walls of solid steel! Hear the cries of baffled rage as Superman thwarts desperate criminals and unscrupulous Nazi spies!
Yes sir! You'll certainly enjoy hearing the adventures of your favorite as brought to you by swell-flavored KELLOGG'S PEP. And you'll certainly enjoy eating PEP for breakfast—it tastes so darn good and crisp. Tops with milk and sugar, or fruit. Also, don't forget PEP is crammed full of "builder-uppers"—more "steady nerve" vitamin B1 and "sunshine" vitamin D per serving than any other nationally advertised whole-wheat flakes!
TUNE IN SUPERMAN, Monday thru Friday, MUTUAL STATIONS
See your local newspaper for time and station
Kellogg's PEP
WHOLE WHEAT FLAKES



England's Weetabix (1978) buyers got three of the 18 possible "dynamic-action picture-cards" free inside!

Cocoa or Fruity Pebbles Poster, Honey-Comb Stickers, Super Sugar Crisp Mini-Comic Book, and Alpha-Bits Iron-On, Once again the Breakfast With The Super Heroes Contest is offered, but this time you could "instantly" win (with an "instant winner" card inside) or you could send away for a instant winner card. This time Post upped its grand prizes to four, upped the bicycles to 500 (without decals) and added over 1 million third prizes. Third prizes consisted of Super Heroes kites, flying discs and "double thick" Super Friends comic books (do any *CBM* readers know what these were?). The side panel promised cereal eaters that they could win one out of ten times with a instant winner card.

The third set of five cereals (also 1981-82) had the same cereals but this time their promotion was truly brilliant. Each box had a scene of a Super Hero and water-color paints on back in which you painted a super villain into the picture. The instructions said to use a paintbrush or a cotton swab (read Q-Tip). Only the Cocoa or Fruity Pebbles had Superman, Honey-Comb and Super Sugar Crisp featured Batman & Robin, and Alpha-Bits had showcased Wonder Woman. Again the "Breakfast With The Super Heroes" Contest is offered, but in this promotional campaign, kids would actually send in their finished paintings as their entry and would be "judged" by the "staff" of DC comics. Post wasn't holding back this time and upped the ante to nine grand prizes. Over 1000 second prizes (AMF 10-Speed bicycles) were offered and everybody that entered won a set of Super Heroes Puffi-Stickers. Post was smart... every contestant won something!

During the Superman III movie (1983), Post put out a nice box for our neighbors to the north (Canada). It had two photos of Christopher Reeves on the front and a great shot of Chris as Supe flying right at you on the back. The produced-for-Canada cereals included Cocoa and Fruity Pebbles, Sugar Crisp, Honeycomb and Alpha-Bits. Free inside was one of ten Superman III "Magic Vinyl" stickers and you could also send away for three Corgi "Junior Superman" vehicles. The Canadian Superman cereal boxes also had a contest... "Win a Superman Adventure." The Canadian winner would be flown (first class) to New York and then on to London, England (to visit Pinewood Studios where the Superman special effects were filmed). The winner would also receive 2,000 Canadian dollars. Probably the best part of this prize was you would also be sent to DC in New York where you would be sketched and placed in a story in a Superman comic book.

A decade later (1994), Kellogg's produced America's Cinnamon Mini Buns in America featuring the new, bulkier Superman on the front with a "free inside" mini comic book. The back displayed the four comics, Flash, Star Riders, Justice League and the one Superman vs Metallo. Canada had Supe on 3 cereals, Cinnamon Mini Buns and Corn Pops offered an action folder inside and the back has a long-haired shadowed Superman against a steel background. The third box is Froot Loops with Super Sam on front and Superman flying against a giant background of Froot Loop cereal. A shoot & score game was printed on the inside.

Well, there you have it CBM readers... a quick overview of the wonderful world of the Man of Cereal. As we approach the next millennium, more and more we'll be hearing the term "20th Century Collectible." As far as Superman stuff goes, I hope everyone realizes that comic books, newspaper strips, big-little books, comic-related items, giveaways, premiums, advertising materials, cereal boxes, toys and the rest... are all part of one big family of Superman collectibles. Thanks for reading, and happy 60th to the Man of Steel!

1954

1957

1956 1947

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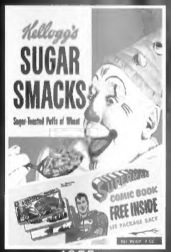

1955

1955

1954 1977

1994 1983

SUPERMAN CEREAL CUPBOARD